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HUNTING REMINISCENCES

BY

ALFRED E. PEASE, M.P.

Two Hundred Copies only of this *Edition de Luxe* have been printed, and the Type distributed.

No. 5



FROZEN OUT.

From a coloured sketch by the late SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD.

HUNTING REMINISCENCES

BY

ALFRED E. PEASE, M.P.

AUTHOR OF "THE CLEVELAND HOUNDS AS A TRENCHER-FED PACK" "HORSE-BREEDING FOR FARMERS" &c.



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I

REMINISCENCES OF THE CAMBRIDGE DRAG AND THE HOUSE OF COMMONS STEEPLECHASES



MR. A. E. PEASE, M.P., ON "NORA CREINA,"
Winner of House of Commons Point-to-Point Race, 1891.

I

I AM asked to begin with some reminiscences of the Cambridge University Drag and of the House of Commons Steeplechases. The former is not quite an easy task, for, after a lapse of sixteen or seventeen years, memory has to be plied with whip and spur before she will come up to the starting-post.

It is many years since I first started from my rooms in 19, Trinity Street, and mounted Election, starting at the door to

ride my first drag on that beautiful, roaring, arch-kneed, and queer-tempered bloody son of Ballot. And yet, after all the excellent sport I have seen since, I very much doubt if any hours were ever more enjoyed than those spent in tearing over the picked patches of Cambridgeshire after aniseed, behind or in front of the wild brutes we dignified with the name of hounds. I remember that first day better than many a more glorious gallop after. Four of us jogged to the meet at Lords Bridge in the rain: the present Vicar of Bethnal Green (Hon. A. G. Lawley) carried the horn on old Gingertail; Lord Binning (Colonel in the Blues), on that king of drag-horses, Mosquito; Mr. Percy Aylmer of Walworth; and Mr. Mitchell of Forcett. As far as I

can remember, when the hounds were laid on, we composed the whole field. I knew that a new-comer was, if kindly welcomed, critically watched, and I confess that I was nervous; I had no confidence in my horse, who would at times refuse to face anything. How I hoped it would be one of his jumping days! As for his galloping, it was worth all the two hundred guineas that my father had given for him two years previously, when he was sound in wind and fresh on his legs.

Away we went! I can see now Lawley's black and white trousers, with a strap under the knee, on each side of old Gingertail, popping over the fences three lengths ahead of me as we covered the first two miles. Soon after Lawley, Aylmer,

Binning, and I got level—a fence, a rail, another fence, then two gates in and out of the road, all abreast. Lawley is elbowed off the gates, and Gingertail jumps the gate-posts; the other three of us rattle the top bars with our horses' knees. The pace is terrific; three silent hounds racing over the grass and flying the fences ahead, the rest no one cares where;—Leete, the dragsman, in view, sitting on his horse two fields ahead under a high fence. Two fields of grass, two more great fences, — over the last of which we land like shot rubbish, —a touch with the spur to Election, and he draws out, finishing first, just as old Norman, the leading hound, reaches Leete.

No more trailing about the ploughs after the Cambridgeshire Fox-hounds for me!

This is settled between Election and myself as we all trot back to Cambridge, and lark, while our blood is still warm, over the hand-gates and stiles along the footpath to the town. The authorities, I have understood, never smiled on the Drag. In my heart I believe that most of them had not an idea of what it was. It only meant to them something to do with horses and "dogs," or, perhaps, a coach on wheels; something associated with a rather troublesome class of undergraduates who paid little respect to them, except when invited to do so by a slip, suggesting that a call should be made on the senior Proctor or "the Dean." Then, when a quiet young man appeared in his gown, with his cap in his hand, they, no doubt, were more puzzled than ever at

the various kinds of relaxation that we indulged in. The notions we had of their pursuits were probably as stupid as theirs of ours ; but if any of the old scowlers ever watch the subsequent careers of some of those they looked on as "impossible," they must find among those they regarded as harum-scarum, devil-may-care followers of the Drag, the names of men who have led devoted lives as clergymen in East-end slums, who have filled high office under the Queen, who have made brave soldiers and good citizens.

Not long ago I went to shake hands with two old friends of Cambridge days before they were removed to Holloway Gaol, with the rest of Dr. Jameson's raiders. Whatever their faults, and however lament-

able the results of the raid, there can be no doubt of the good stuff they are made of. How well I remember "Sir J.," as we called Sir John Willoughby, riding against Mr. George Lambton in the Barton Drag, and both coming down, and Sir J.'s horse getting up and putting his foot on his master's face, much to the detriment of his features. Many a good rider in the silk has learned his first lesson with the Drag, and George Lambton was one. He used to ride a young bay thoroughbred, Julian, which had been scratched for the Derby, and, with all the glorious pride and confidence of youth, used to send him along at five furlongs pace over, or rather through, the Cambridgeshire gates, not one of which I ever saw him clear! Not one

whit discouraged, Julian used to start, but never, to my knowledge, "finished." It is curious how much pleasure undergraduates seem to find in lying on their backs and standing on their heads in Cambridgeshire ploughs. Talking of the raiders reminds me that I once rode from Cambridge with one of them (the Hon. R. White) to Stowe Fox. I was riding a three-year-old mare, and rode her the whole way to the meet without touching the bridle. Coming home, my companion bettered my performance by riding his horse over every gate we met on a bridle-road, which, considering that he, like the rest of us, had taken a toss at the Stowe Fox brook, shows that he then had nerve that ought to stand a life's wear and tear. My brother (Mr. J. A. Pease, now M.P.),

and Capt. B. H. Philips (of the 23rd R. W. F.), with myself, together occupied a house in Trinity Street. Some days we used to sally out together to inspect the Fitzwilliam, at Gidding Windmill, or some other favourite spot, and take the Drag three afternoons a week to fill up the time between hunting days.

Of all animals under the sun an undergraduate's horse is the most wonderful. I have known Philips ride with the Drag on Friday, hunt with the Fitzwilliam on Saturday, again on Monday, and go to the Pytchley (Woodland) on Tuesday, Lucifer (appropriate name) his mount each day, but truth compels me to add, not for another three weeks afterwards.

The days with the Fitzwilliam were often

very hard days for horses. It meant leaving before seven in the morning, boxing to Huntingdon, and after a good breakfast at the "George," hacking any distance from six to twelve miles to cover—and the same way home again. One such day is fixed in my mind, for it was the one on which I first donned a pink coat, and I have found the following account in a letter I wrote: "Yesterday nine of us went by the 7.0 train to Huntingdon, where we had breakfast. We then hacked on eleven miles to the meet. We had a wonderful fast hunting-run, hounds going all the time, from five minutes to one till ten minutes past three. Bertie Philips' and Devas' (Mr. E. Devas) horses were ridden to a standstill half an hour before we finished, and all our horses

were pretty well cooked. We had then thirteen miles to Huntingdon on "done" horses. Philips dragged his about four miles to a village, then put up. We struggled on to the next, sat in the inn an hour, and started again, eventually reaching Huntingdon, where we left the horses and caught a train to Cambridge. The country was very deep, and it was a tremendous run."

Among the men whose names I remember, who distinguished themselves with the Drag in my time were the following :—Mr. Hoole (killed whilst riding for the 'Varsity Whip, at St. Ives, 1876); Mr. Herbert Magniac (master of the Drag, 1877–78); Earl of Yarborough, Lord Binning, Sir John Willoughby, Sir H. Meux, Hon. A. G. Lawley, Hon. A. Lawley, Hon. R. White, Hons.

R. and H. Fitzwilliam, Messrs. J. M. Paulton, J. A. Pease, Graham, Barnard, P. Aylmer, E. Aylmer, H. Russell, F. R. Meuricoffre, B. H. Philips, H. C. Bentley, W. C. Ellis, R. L. Pike, C. Antrobus, C. A. Fellowes, and E. Devas. There are, doubtless, many other names which should occur to me.

I had several good horses during my time at Cambridge,—I mean good for the purpose to which an undergraduate devotes a horse. There was Election, fast, but a queer screw, and very musical. Saucebox, a most accomplished timber jumper and whistler, never gave me falls, except over water and doubles; he jumped twenty-one gates in the White Horse Barton Drag on one occasion. This day a man fell, at a gate I

had jumped, into the road, and his hat flew past me, but I caught it in the air as my horse rose at the gate out ; my brother, who was my whip then, took it from me and carried it to the finish. Shamrock was a clever horse, and only gave me one fall in one term; he came from the Hon. Mark Rolles. Osman was my brother's horse. He was a wonderful stayer and fencer, but gave us both many a roll. I have seen him fall down three times going to the meet with my brother, who counted this as a little failing of no account whatever. Osman carried me through perhaps the best run the Pytchley (Woodland) had during Lord Spencer's Mastership—fifty minutes from Finedon Poplars to Thrapstone. Philips and I had boxed through to Kettering, and it is not every

M.F.H. that would give a party of undergraduates such a warm reception as Lord Spencer gave us. The survivors of this run were Lord Spencer, Captain B. Beecher, Lord Yarborough, Hon. C. R. Spencer, B. H. Philips, and myself. I have seen few finer runs than this in my life, and old Osman never made a mistake. The last hunter I had at Cambridge was a four-year-old mare, Queen Mab, a charming and precocious young thing, of whom more anon.

To return to the Drag for a moment.

The Over Drag and the Downing Arms were considered the severest in my day. The former was a course of some three miles, but a fence for every hundred yards, and a big fence too. I rode this Drag six times, and only once got to the end of it on

one of my own horses. Thrice I never finished, and of the other times I won it once on a thoroughbred belonging to that excellent sportsman, Mr. W. H. Garforth, of Gilling, and once on a black hireling, appropriately named Satan.

The first time I got through this Drag it was won by Lord Binning. It was a ludicrous finish. Lawley broke his girth over a stile into the last field but one; the next fence was a bullfinch with a great black fen ditch beyond, a regular death-trap. Lawley and Binning were neck and neck across the field, and I was just behind. Girths or no girths, Gingertail had to do it, but the peck on landing left him a clean back. Binning's horse fell on landing, and the two raced in on foot; my horse fell, and

I only made a moderate third behind the men on foot. Binning had a thorn in his eye, and had to get off to Cambridge, and then to London, to get it cut out. We all expected to see him back minus the eye, but it was sound again within a week or two. In this Drag, Mosquito jumped the biggest place I have ever seen leaped. I often wish I had gone to measure it, and I fear to state my impressions of what its dimensions are. It consisted of a high four-rail timber fence on the top of a high bank, with about twelve or fourteen feet of water on the take-off side. As Binning was going to have it, I pulled back a length, hoping he would bring the rail down when he fell, as fall he must. To my astonishment, up flew Mosquito over the water; I saw for a

second the whole four feet of bank under the horse, and in another moment he was over the rails, just carrying the top-rail away with his hind-legs. I got over with a smash through the next rail. It is my honest opinion that Mosquito jumped seven feet in the air and covered some twenty-five feet in this marvellous jump.

Once during my Mastership I organised a Drag that was to be on the pattern of a long hunting-run, by making the course some fourteen miles, instead of the usual five or six. I arranged with old Leete that we could run two Drags into one, leaving half a mile twice without scent being laid, to give us "checks" and time to breathe our horses and get hounds together. But the hounds were too cunning. They carried

such a head that when we reached the first check at the end of the Two Pot House Drag, they flashed straight on up wind and made for the place where they were usually started for the other drag. It was too severe for the numerous field, and I never tried it again. There were some nine that finished, and it was won by Mr. F. R. Meuricoffre, of Naples, who has since proved himself a good rider over many a steeple-chase course in his native Italy. Here are the last entries I made, at the close of my undergraduate career, in 1879.

Nov. 22. Fulbourn Drag—Queen Mab went beautifully.

„ 25. Barton White Horses. 23 started. 9 at finish. 18 falls.

„ 28. Five Bells, Oakington. 23 at the meet. 3 in with hounds.

„ 30. Moyes Farm. Capital day. 27 out. 4 finished.



House of Commons Point-to-Point Race,

From a drawing by Cuthbert Bradley

Dec. 1. Fox's Bridge. 6½ miles. 23 minutes.

„ 4. Stowe Fox. Finished my Mastership, getting my last fall at the brook, and the only one Saucebox gave me with the Drag. I handed over the horn to my brother.

Since then the Drag has flourished, and I understand things are done in a style we never dreamed of. Amongst the Masters that carried the horn after my time were my brother, Mr. J. A. Pease, the present Duke of Leeds, Mr. Le Fleming, Mr. Ivor Guest, the Duke of Marlborough, Mr. Beddington, Mr. Wiloughby, Mr. Macreary, Mr. F. M. Freake, Lord Ronaldshay, and several others whose names do not occur to me at the moment.

I heard of the followers of the red herring having two Drags in one day in 1895, Stowe Fox in the morning, and Downing Arms after lunch. The usual field was augmented

by several jockeys from Newmarket (including T. Loates, Woodburn, Barker and Rickaby). I heard that several fine tosses were scored by Mr. T. Loates, and that Barker finally won the drag after a punishing finish, in which he beat Rickaby by a neck.

The first year in which a House of Commons Steeplechase took place was in 1889, and this pleasant and sporting meeting, which then promised to become an annual one, was abandoned about 1893 in consequence of the sad end of Captain "Bay" Middleton the year before. In 1889, I entered an Irish mare, Peggy Dillon, but scratched her, and took no part in the race. This took place in the Bicester country, from the village of Hillesden to that of Chetwade, over a stiff course, but

chiefly grass. I remember that the ground was soft and going heavy. The distance was three and three-quarter miles, and the conditions briefly—catchweight over 13 stone, all horses to be the property of, and ridden by, an M.P., and no horse to have previously won a steeplechase. Lord Chesham started a field of ten senators, and the result of the race was as follows :—

Mr. Cyril Flower's Home Rule, 13 st. 8½ lb. (afterwards disqualified).	1
Mr. Elliot Lees' Damon, 13 st.	2
Mr. J. Fitzwilliam's Marcellus, 13 st. 11 lb.	3
Mr. F. B. Mildmay's horse, 13 st.	0
Mr. W. Long's horse, 13 st. 8¼ lb.	0
Mr. Bromley-Davenport's Berkshire, 13 st.	0
Mr. P. A. Muntz's Dauntless, 15 st. 4¼ lb.	0
Lord Henry Bentinck's Border Chief, 13 st. 10½ lb.	0
Mr. J. B. White's horse, 13 st. 6¾ lb.	0
Mr. W. Jarvis's Conjuror, 13 st.	0
Lord Newark's horse, 13 st.	0
Colonel Heath's horse, 13 st.	0

Mr. Muntz, in spite of his great weight, cut out the work to begin with in company with Mr. Bromley-Davenport. The latter fell early on, and Mr. Muntz was put back by the heavy going. Any chance of Mr. Jarvis's winning was extinguished by his horse breaking a leg. Near home, Mr. Lees and Mr. Mildmay were leading, with Home Rule close behind. Lord Henry Bentinck, Colonel Heath, and others fell, as did Mr. Mildmay and Mr. Lees at the last brook, where Mr. Flower, passing them, pulled off the race; but his horse was afterwards disqualified, as it was discovered that many years previously he had won a race in Lincolnshire, before he had been purchased by Mr. Flower. It can be imagined that this success in disqualifying Home Rule

was the subject of much chaff among the politicians interested in the race, and I hear party feeling rather got the better of the judgment of some two or three M.P.'s, as some nasty things were said about Mr. Flower, who is the last man living to do a "sharp" thing. He had acted in good faith, and made no secret that he had re-christened his old hunter, Sultan, Home Rule for the occasion. For a man of his weight and years, on an old hunter, to cut down a lot of young bloods over the Bicester country was a performance that is not often equalled.

The following year, 1890, we went down from Euston to Rugby, where I remember many of us changed, and were most hospitably entertained by Captain David Beatty

before weighing out. The course was a beautiful one, on a horseshoe of grass, unbroken, save by the fences, which were a goodly size, but not more than a fair sample of the Warwickshire and Leicestershire countries. We were divided into two classes, a twelve-stone and a fourteen-stone class, and we who rode in the former were rather amused and surprised to find that Mr. Muntz's great, yet beautiful mare, with about sixteen stone on her back, was entered in our lot. We all were to start together, and Mr. Ashton, M.F.H., sent on the way a field of thirteen. From this point I will attempt to describe what I was able to see of the race. Except that my grey mare was a good hunter, and had beaten another in a trial, I had no idea of what

she could do in a race. She was, I believe, originally bought in Ireland for £17, and I purchased her for £85, with the simple character that she required riding, would face fire, wire, or water, and would not pass a Vet., as her eye was marked by a thorn-prick. I never dreamed of being in the running at all, but thought I would make it hot for the first mile or two, trusting that, at the pace I knew she could fence, I might cut out some of the competitors. I started off with a lead, closely followed by Mr. Mildmay, on the favourite, Discretion, who seemed determined to frustrate my intention to distance my field. By the time we reached the first brook, Sir Savile Crossley, as well as Mr. Mildmay, were close on my quarters. Discretion fell, and I kept an easy lead till

about five fences from home. Here we were confronted by a very stiff bullfinch, with what appeared to be a gate in the middle of it. There is not much time for inspection on these occasions, and, seeing no daylight through the black fence, I kept on my course for the gate. As I approached it, I realised it was not a gate, but a high barrier beyond a drinking-place. It was too late to change my mind, and I held on, Nora Creina, my mare, carrying the rails into the next field and letting several others through the gap we made. I saw several falling at the bullfinch, and among them Mr. Jarvis, who got a nasty kick in the face, and displayed a thing like a concertina afterwards, which he alleged he had worn on his head. Two fences

from home Mr. Elliott Lees caught me, and ere we got into the straight had me settled, as Nora could not get up the hill. This was the first and last time I ever resorted to the spur with her, and when I found she could not answer to it, we accepted our fate. The result of the race was—

TWELVE-STONE CLASS.

Mr. Elliott Lees' b g Damon by Wild Charlie, owner.	1
Mr. A. E. Pease's gr m Nora Creina by Lord Gough, owner	2
Mr. Hermon Hodges' b m Lady Evelyn, Lord E. Hamilton	3
Sir Savile Crossley's ch g Chaff, owner . . .	0
Mr. Hermon Hodges' Hartlebury, owner . . .	0
Mr. Muntz's Duchess, owner	0
Mr. Mildmay's Discretion, owner	0
Mr. Yerburgh's Schoolboy, owner	0

FOURTEEN-STONE CLASS.

Mr. W. H. Long's b g Crusader, owner . . .	1
Hon. G. Wyndham's ch m Daffodil, owner. . .	2
Mr. Hermon Hodges' ch g The Don, Mr. Jarvis .	3
Mr. Cyril Flower's b g No Name, owner . .	0
Mr. H. L. Lawson's b g Hedgehog, owner . . .	0

Mr. Long, Mr. Mildmay, Mr. Jarvis Mr. Lawson, and Mr. Cyril Flower, fell.

I rode a very bad race, due to want of knowledge of my mare's powers and the distance of the course, but these disadvantages I shared in common with my colleagues. I felt the justice of Captain "Bay" Middleton's opinion, which I overheard, and these were the last words I ever heard him speak. Some one remarked that my mare went magnificently. "Yes," said Bay; "but she was damned badly ridden," and he knew something of what he was talking about. The following year, however, we did something to retrieve our character, as, with a turn of luck, we won over a bigger country, and defeated the winner of 1889 and 1890—coming in first with great ease.

I have found the following lines, written

after the race, by Mr. W. Philpotts Williams :—

THE SENATORS' RACE, 1891.

The Mace and the Speaker are left for to-day,
Both Tories and Rads. come to witness the play.
The laws of debate, and the questions and bills
Are cast to the winds on the Staverton Hills,
And Commons and Lords, with the men of the Chase,
All join in the fun of the Senators' Race.

In the place of the Speaker the man with the flag
Gives the office to go with his piece of red rag ;
The gallery of ladies, no longer in trouble,
Have freedom to talk, which they do at the double ;
And everyone comes with a smile on his face,
To see senators ride in the Senators' Race.

The "Heavies" in numbers are not very strong,
But good in the choice of Muntz, Bentinck, and Long ;
The "Lights" have a favourite in Lees, who can show
His Dorsetshire horse is a nailer to go.
Two years in succession they fought for a place,
And pulled off the Stakes in the Senators' Race.

They're off! is the cry; the shouting is loud;
And Pease's good grey leads the galloping crowd,
A head like a lady's, an eye like a deer—
A sweet combination of courage and fear,
From the start to the finish it looks like "a case"
For the man on the grey in the Senators' Race.

Away for the brook, and away for the hill,
The Lights and the Heavies are galloping still,
And still we can see in the acres of grass,
Each trying his best his companions to pass.
The hill in the distance, the flag at the base,
Is the course they have marked for the Senators' Race.

Back over the valley comes Pease and his mare,
And wins a good race with plenty to spare;
And Long and Lord Henry fight for the lead,
The former comes up at the best of his speed,
But the latter pulls off at a galloping pace
The Heavyweight Prize in the Senators' Race.

A man who can follow the horn and the hounds,
And ride to the chase with its musical sounds,
Is made of the stuff that the country requires,
And always has points that the country admires.
With other great nations we'll ride for a place,
Still led by the men of the Senators' Race.

The result of the race was—

1. Mr. A. E. Pease's gr m Nora Creina by Lord Gough (light weight), owner 1
2. Lord Henry Bentinck's br g Bugler by Berserker (heavy weight), owner. 1
3. M. W. H. Long's Crusader (heavy weight), owner 2
4. Mr. Hermon Hodge's Lady Evelyn by Vengeance (heavy weight), owner 3

Others unplaced: Mr Elliot Lees' Damon (owner), fell; Mr. Bromley-Davenport's Dawtrey (owner); Mr. Bromley-Davenport's Delilah (Lord Carmarthen); Lord E. Hamilton's Bridget (owner), refused first fence; Sir S. Crossley's Borderer (owner), fell; Mr. Yerburgh's Dawson; Mr. Yerburgh's Haphazard; Mr. G. Wyndham's Daffodil (owner).

Distance, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. Time, 10 minutes, 18 seconds.

Fortune favoured me, as two of the horses I thought most dangerous, Damon and Borderer, fell, the former at the last brook; whilst Lord Henry Bentinck with one or two others made a bad turn, and practically lost a field at the half-way flag. This was an awkward moment for all of us, as it was impossible to see the home flag from the field in which we were, which was walled round with an enormous high black bullfinch, so dense that though several of us had it, Sir Savile Crossley's horse came down with a heavy fall into the next field, and Nora Creina literally hung in the top before she dropped out on to the grass ten feet below. Among the congratulations I received on my victory were those telegraphed to me by my political

chief, Mr. Gladstone; but the ones I think I prized most were from my Cleveland hunting companions, with whom my good grey mare and I had spent many a happy day in our wild rough country.

II

THE LIFE OF A HUNTER



"Queen Mab."

II

MY name is Queen Mab. I am little more than twenty years old, not a great age, counted by years, as the life of a horse goes; but it is the pace that kills, and I have been made to go the pace in my younger days, and have done my duty as far as in me lay, since I have withdrawn from the more active scenes of the world. I have brought up five of my offspring and never lost a foal, and I have gained the admiration and affection of those

with whom I have been associated. It is with some hesitation that I undertake the task of recording my own career, for I feel that I must give some account of my personality and qualities, and after the lapse of so many years I know my memory is defective as to the earlier days; but, standing as I do, with the last big fence which we all have to take in front of me, I am only desirous of giving a fair portrait of myself, and am careless of criticism. My days are numbered, but I, who never knew what fear was, feel no dread of the end, and I know I shall soon rest under the green grass of the paddock where I have lived out in comfort the last years of my life. I have seen many of my contemporaries pass away, and I shall lie beside brave comrades.

At one time the idea that I might possibly at the last be sent to the kennels was a disagreeable one, but, in a meditative old age, I have derived comfort from the thought that, even if this was my ultimate fate, my poor old body would enter into the young blood of the hounds with whom I spent the best time of my life, and that I ought to consider it a privilege to be incorporated with the flying pack, and so in a sense live for evermore.

Well, then, I was born in the year 1876 on an Irish farm, and here I spent my infant years by the side of my mother when she was not at work. She had been a hunter herself, had been driven in an Irish car, had won a farmer's race, and been a general slave to the sporting family she worked

for. She was a big mare with plenty of bone, and, I believe, if not of the best family, at anyrate well connected, and, so far as I could learn, there was no record in her family history of any of those mésalliances with hairy-heeled families which are such a curse to hunters. My sire was a thoroughbred, with the blood of Sir Hercules and Blair Athol in his veins, but, alas! I have forgotten his name; and, indeed, it is a wonder that I know anything of my pedigree at all, for, till I passed into my present owner's hands, I heard so many different accounts of my descent that I was quite bewildered. But I have long seen enough of the world to know that the great proportion of the pedigrees given to hunters are fictitious, and quite understand why I

am always described as "pedigree unknown." Anyhow, I know that my sire, like my dam, had been a slave, and been run in almost a hundred races and steeplechases. I have always felt that I owed most of my own qualities of endurance and sound constitution to being the offspring of parents whose soundness was due to their hard life, as well as to their freedom from hereditary complaints.

In colour, I was a full, rich chestnut, with a white blaze, and was certainly pretty when young. I was not an ideal hunter-made mare, for when I was foaled I stood over at the knees, and always had a tendency to do this: I have heard connoisseurs say that this is a fault on the right side, and certainly I had it in common with many

of the best cross-country horses I have known.

I had fairly good shoulders and a nicely-placed neck, well-sprung ribs, a strong, muscular loin and good arms and thighs, while the quality of my coat, my clean, sinewy limbs, and quick ears and eyes proved my good descent better than any paper pedigree. Throughout my life I have been blessed with robust health and a great appetite. I have often been leg-weary, but I never felt depressed in spirits, and at the end of the longest day I was always impatient to get to my manger. I have still the soundest of wind, and have escaped all the most serious kinds of accidents, and I never had the iron on me. I have had my share of over-reaches, cuts, bruises, and have

now an enormous knee, caused by some osseous growth, resulting from the non-removal of a thorn.

My young days spent in Ireland left but little impression on me, beyond the fact that the grass was sweeter and better than any I have tasted since; and though I was less cared for than the youngsters I have seen growing up in England, both the pasture and climate seemed to do all that was necessary in stimulating growth and fitting me for the battle of life. I must pass over the months during which I was broken in by a young Irishman, who used to terrify me by his noise and wild ways, but who knew what he was about, and broke my will to his own in a devil-may-care sort of way, but with always a tender hand on the bit.

Whether this was natural to him, or because his tackle was always as rotten as pash, I never found out. I remember that when a rising three-year-old I was shipped to Liverpool, and this voyage left me with the worst illness I ever had in my life, which they called a steamboat cold, and I felt wretched for weeks after. I have noticed it takes more than a year to get a young Irish horse into condition, often two years; for in Ireland they will take up a raw young horse, give him a slight education before he has got hard meat into him, and then shut him up in a box and feed him, as if he were a pig, on boiled potatoes, boiled corn and turnips, and anything that comes handy. He is then sold, and goes to England, and often arrives running at the

nose, and coughing. This illness has to be got rid of, and all the rotten-potato flesh as well. He is all the time a weak young horse, requiring a year of gentle conditioning, good food and exercise, before he is fit to ride to hounds. I make this digression to expose another injustice to Ireland, and in the hope of saving some Irish horses from the abuse and misery that they endure because their English masters think they have got a made and matured hunter in their hands instead of a weak, inexperienced, and badly-nourished youngster.

From Liverpool I was sent to London, went into a very small stable, and saw something during the summer of life in town. I got accustomed to the noise and traffic of the streets, and to threading my way amongst

crowds and carriages. I was high-spirited, and, perhaps with the idea of checking my exuberant spirits, or just because I moved nicely and carried myself prettily, I was put into harness, and then went leader to my only stable companion in a tandem. I have always felt rather ashamed of alluding to this part of my life, as most of the hunters I was associated with afterwards would have counted such a thing an indignity to their profession. Still, in looking back, I do not know that I suffered any harm by the few weeks' experience of harness, and, indeed, am not sure that my good temper and willingness to do all that was asked of me does not owe something to this early training. I was only three years old, and it was easier for me to go leader in a tandem than

to carry a man to hounds. But my master occasionally took me and gave me a day or half a day with hounds. He was never hard, being proud of me, and though he would ride me straight in a short gallop, he never tried me too high. In this way I learned a good deal, and, being very fond of galloping and jumping, was a tractable pupil, and was soon what they called "handy." By this time I could walk in and out of a horse-box like a Christian, and cared not a dump for engines and steam whistles.

It was one of the early days in October 1879, that, full of beans, I entered Tattersall's yard for the first and last time—from that day to this I never changed masters. I was pulled out a great many times on Saturday, and by evening was heartily sick of

having my clothes pulled off, being punched in the ribs, my windpipe squeezed, my feet lifted, and run up and down the yard. Till Sunday afternoon I was left in peace, but then, again, I was constantly having my mouth looked at, and I slept that night with a taste of dirty fingers, dogskin, and cigar-ends in my mouth. Monday morning was a repetition of Saturday, but I noticed that nearly everyone who inspected my mouth paid little further attention to me, as I had only a three-year-old mouth. About eleven o'clock I got wild with a Vet., who made rushes at me, and stuck his top-hat over my eyes, and nipped me on my loins. I began to plunge and let out freely with my heels, and very nearly brained my future master, who was standing against the wall

hard by. As it was, I knocked his hat off and hit the end of his nose. I was surprised to find that he was my owner, about three o'clock the same afternoon. I had made such an exhibition of my heels that with that, and my extreme youth, I was knocked down to him at sixty guineas. A new career now opened to me, and I was sent down to Cambridge, where my new master then was, and so I commenced life at the University. My owner was in Newman's stable-yard talking to Tom Hill, a very stout, short, horsey little man, who generally stood in the yard, scolding the lads, giving orders in highly persuasive language, or addressing his clients as if they had given him mortal offence. As I was led in, he turned to my new owner and said, "Wot's this?" and after looking at me

from where he stood, he stepped up and took a peep into my mouth. "Well, what do you think of her, Tom?" said my master. "What do I think of 'er? That depends on what yer think you're goin' to make of 'er." "Oh, I am going to hunt the Drag on her. I wanted another, and picked her up cheap." "Ye're goin' to 'unt 'er, are yer; she's more like 'untin' you. You gintlemen thinks you can 'unt hanything—not but what she's a nice mare, but, lor' bless yer, sir, she knows no more about 'unting than my 'at." (To the groom) "Number thirty-five ready for 'er; put 'er in, Fred."

At the age of twenty, the inexperienced undergraduate, I often observed while at Cambridge, performed feats and treated horses in a manner that makes my now

unkempt mane and tail stand on end at the bare recollection. What a life it was, to be sure! One day boxed to Huntingdon and ridden twelve miles to a meet; pounded about all day, no matter whether hounds were running or not; larked all the way home; hurried to the train, and not back in one's box till ten or eleven at night. Pulled out the next afternoon, and raced for twenty minutes with the Drag, and, after a punishing finish, accompanying the hounds back to the kennels; and then, for a last flutter, taken over all the gates and stiles along the footpath leading to the town. If my stable companions were lame, I was perhaps the next day hacked over to Newmarket, and kept on the course till the last race was over, and then taken home as fast as my legs

could carry me, in order that my master might be marked "in" for Hall — a thing insisted upon by the College authorities during Newmarket meetings. Happily for me, I had stable companions to share my work with me, and I must admit that my master, considering his age, showed me consideration, and selected one of the two other horses when he anticipated the Drag would be a particularly rough one; for you must know that in my time there were some Drags where it was on record that hardly anyone had ever got to the end without a fall. The first time I went out with the University Drag, I was sent at a black gate in the second fence. I had not been accustomed to this sort of thing, and hit it hard with my knees; but I always had a leg to spare, so

did not come down, and to my owner's delight won the Drag.

I never felt any charm at the gates in Cambridgeshire; they are quite insignificant compared with those in Yorkshire. Big timber was never my forte, but it would have been a very curious place that stopped me. I always found some way of negotiating an obstacle. I could go in and out, off and on, top a fence, kick back, bore through, and climb like a cat. I have trotted across a single plank over a stream, and jumped a stile at the end of it. I have followed my master on a single foot-bridge over a ravine, wriggling through a V-stile at each end, and could hold my own among the wild hills and moors of Cleveland, or in the most cramped of countries. I remember

once in a run charging a bullfinch, which had on the far side a strong high post and rails, some nine feet from the fence. I knew I should have to make some sort of a try. It was too high to jump, there was no room, and I was not heavy enough to break it, so I just reared up, got my fore-end well over, and trailed my hind-legs after me, only leaving a few hairs on the top rail. After that, my owner always said that I could go anywhere where a man could get.

In 1880, both my master and I considered our education complete, and with all the confidence of youth believed that no one could teach us anything. After twenty years, however, I expect we are both inclined to think that at the end of the longest life we can only hope to know a little of the

world we live in. I have always regretted never having seen one of the big grass countries. I am sure I was fast enough and could "go on," but I daresay my master was right in thinking me undersized (being only 15.3) for facing big fences continuously; and though I was able to jump big and wide, when it was necessary, I do not know that I could have kept it up, and have never considered myself as likely to be able to compete with real Leicestershire hunters. As soon as we went down from Cambridge, my master got married, and, towards the end of the following season, I was advanced to carrying his wife. This I did for four years, during the time as often carrying my master; and I can say that throughout those years I never once made a mistake or gave

either of them a fall. I can boast that I am the only hunter my master ever possessed of which he could say this. At the end of my fourth season with the Cleveland, my fore-legs were beginning to show work. At last I fell on landing over a gate, and the week following on landing over an ordinary fence, so I was withdrawn from active service and had a year's repose. I was then taken up again and did a month's cub-hunting, and three days after the opening meet. But this was the end of my hunting career, for after a fifty minutes' hard run, in which I was kept to the front, I was so lame that there was no choice but to superannuate me, as far as hunting was concerned.

During my hunting career I was often shown in the summer months at the local

shows, sometimes as a hunter, and sometimes as a lady's hack, and I won a number of prizes in both classes. The hunters that then appeared in the show-ring were inferior to those of to-day, or else I should never have made the mark I did. But what amused me most was winning prizes as a lady's hack. My manners were perfect, my paces anything but the correct thing, and my canter far too "short"; and then my poor fore-legs! I stood over frightfully at the knees, and avoided detection by spreading myself out and placing my fore-feet well in front of me. The judges might move me about as much as they pleased, but, as long as I was in the ring, nothing would shake my determination to abandon this very unnatural pose. Having owed my

success in the prize-ring to the custom of judges not to get up and ride ladies' hacks, it would ill become me to decry the system.

Some people would say that instead of being kept up all the summer, it would have been better for me to have been turned out at grass. I have my own decided opinions on this question, having had experience of both systems. I certainly do not think it right to keep a hunter in hard work from the end of one season to the beginning of another. At the close of the season, shoes should be taken off, and the horse be turned into a loose-box with a yard, and bedded down with tan and sawdust, if not with straw. There he should have six weeks' repose. After that, there is no harm in taking him up, if he

has not weakness or accident needing a long rest. To be in a good stable on the best of diet, and to be gently hacked a few times a week, will keep him fit and healthy, and not prevent him putting on plenty of beef to start him well for the next season. I have gone to hounds with greater ease after summers so spent, and been ready in a week or two to do the longest days without distress; whereas, when I have been turned off for the whole summer, I have come up fat and thick in the wind, and it has taken several months before I could do my work with comfort to myself and satisfaction to my rider. But the worst experience I ever had was being turned out. I ate tons of grass, and laid on any amount of flabby flesh, till my legs ached

under my carcase and sagging belly. My legs, instead of fining down, became bigger as I stamped about, plagued all day long by the flies, and waiting for the end of the long summer days when I could feed in peace. Then it was Christmas before I really exchanged my soft for real hard flesh, and felt equal to a long day. If hunters are to be turned out to grass, they should be kept in during the hot days and turned out in the evenings.

I had, also, considerable experience of charges and blisterings, but never felt my legs any better for them, nor did I notice much improvement in their appearance. Talking of legs, I never found that leaving the hair on them during the hunting season saved them from thorns, and it seems to me

that, putting aside the question of appearance (on which there can be no general divergence of opinion), leaving the hair on tends to the collection of dirt, and to the hiding of thorns and abrasions; I have seen just as much mud-fever, if not more, when hair has been left on them, as when legs have been clipped. However, I think this is not an important question one way or the other. I believe myself, mud-fever is a sort of chill, perhaps infectious, as it often goes through a stable, and frequently is absent from a stud for several consecutive seasons. There is no harm in leaving the hair on under the saddle, as it is some slight protection to the skin from friction. However, I was never troubled with a sore back, as my saddle always fitted

me. I have heard many people recommend the practice of only dry brushing and rubbing a horse over instead of washing after a day's hunting, and am inclined to believe it is the safest plan, though I always felt much more comfortable and refreshed after a good wash. But then I was always thoroughly dried, and after standing for a while in my clothing, I had it removed and exchanged for warm sheets from the fire. To be really ready for hard work, the hunter should have the best of oats and hay, and should be kept in a dry, well-ventilated box. A good linseed gruel should be ready for him at the end of a day's hunting, and it should never be counted waste of time to put in and gruel the hunter before a long ride home. I never could

bear the long walk home that I noticed many of my associates in the field were made to undergo; nothing to me was such a weary and dispiriting job as to trail slowly homewards in the cold frosty air of a winter evening, on an empty belly, with stiffening limbs. I was always ready to second my master's inclination to bring me home sharp. Instead of coming in with a dejected, staring coat, I arrived with a warm glow upon me, and impatient to get at my feed. As to the exercise a hunter requires in the season, if his turn comes as often as mine used to do, generally twice a week, he will not need more than a walk for half an hour the day after hunting, and on the other two week-days two hours' trotting exercise.

When I went to the stud I was first

mated with Lord Zetland's Morocco, to whom I bred a fine weight-carrying hunter named Manacles, who distinguished himself during a good many seasons with Lord Zetland's hounds in carrying a cousin of my master's, whose riding weight was nearly sixteen stone and who is a hard rider. Manacles won one year, with this weight, the Zetland Point to Point, and, with his owner's brother up, the Cleveland Point to Point in 1894. Although I have been mated with better-bred and much better-looking sires, I do not think I have bred another quite as good in the field. It is curious how uneven as a rule are the foals of hunter mares. Manacles was about 17 hands, and a great, striding, fast, staying horse; but the next foal I dropped was never more than a

pony, about 14.3 hands, by Laureate (by Rosicrucian). I then had a very fine daughter, Carina, by Syrian, who went to Mr. Cecil Boyle's stud, after winning many prizes; but my next foal, by Pursebearer, was another weedy one. My last and youngest, Saffron, is a fine mare and a good hunter, and is in many ways very like what I was in my prime. I am not what is called a certain breeder, and I have during the years when I was not engaged in my family duties done some light work on the farm. I never objected to this, and indeed was all the better for it, nor did I ever feel that there was any indignity in useful service.

And now I think I have fairly earned, and can enjoy, the retrospect of a well-spent life. I may not have had a very

distinguished career, but blest with an equable temperament and more than ordinary intelligence, loving the chase, and supported by a robust constitution and a courageous heart, I can, without boasting, say that, even with a somewhat exacting master, I never failed to do anything that was asked of me. And I know, when I go hence, as I trust, to even happier hunting-grounds, that those with whom I have spent my life, and who have shared with me the pleasures of the chase, will feel that one has gone with whom are associated the happiest hours and pleasantest memories of the irrevocable past. I have said nothing about the companions of my old age, and it may be thought that I am lonely ; but other brood mares, whose best years have been spent in hunting, share the

fields with me, and when by chance the hounds come our way, we still take a keen interest in watching the proceedings, and leave off feeding while we discuss the performance of horses and hounds, and our own share in the past, long after the echo of the horn and the distant cry has died away over fence and field. And so I take my leave, asking for my epitaph, if I am considered worthy of it :

HERE LIES

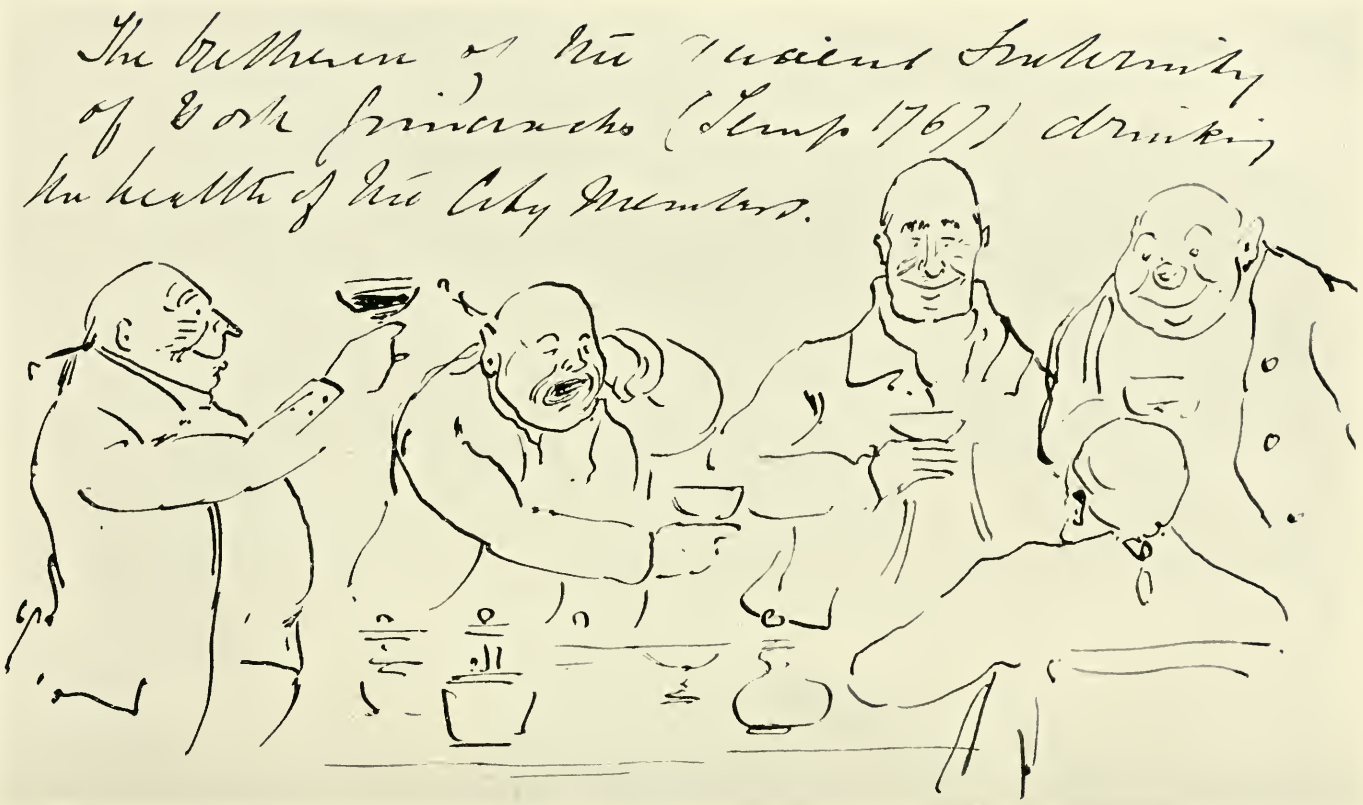
QUEEN MAB

LIFE WELL RUN,

REST WELL WON.

III

HOUNDS



FROM A SKETCH BY THE LATE SIR FRANK LOCKWOOD

III

MEASURED by the human standard, the life of a fox-hound is a short one. It is not a butterfly existence; it cannot be summed up as short and sweet, or as a short and a merry one, for war, hunting, and love, as the proverb says, have a thousand troubles for their pleasure. The problem whether life is worth living is not one that either fox-hunter or fox-hound are likely to strain their intellects in solving. To many persons who follow hounds, as well as to the many who do not, a

fox-hound is little more than a spotted dog. Little do these realise how every hound has its own distinct individuality, and how much careful attention, education, and training each of them has received before it was incorporated with the pack; and that the fox-hound — a wonder of beauty and endurance, with the qualities of nose, pace, and tongue exquisitely developed — has been produced by the labour and skill of Masters of Hounds and huntsmen through more than two centuries. Who can measure the work, the thought, and the anxiety, that have given us the modern fox-hound? How often we remark, "They're a good pack of hounds," but how seldom do we think of the pains that have been taken to make them a good pack!

The selection of brood bitches, the choosing of sires, the rearing of puppies, the finding of walks, the losses by distemper; the accidents, the drafting, the entering; the exercising and disciplining of young hounds; the conditioning of working hounds, their maintenance in health, their feeding and kennelling,—these give but an outline of the subjects that demand the skilled attention of an M.F.H. and his servants. It is man that has made the fox-hound not less than the race-horse. Nature's laws are hard to learn, and slow in their operation, but by lives passed in their study, and by experience and practice, the fox-hound has been evolved, and the kennels of England can boast of many hundred couples of hounds, each one of which

approaches Whyte-Melville's description of Bachelor—

On the straightest of legs and the roundest of feet,
With ribs like a frigate his timbers to meet,
With a fashion and fling and a form so complete,
That to see him dance over the flags is a treat.

But fashion and form without nose are in vain,
And in March or mid-winter, storm, sunshine or rain,
When the line has been fouled, or the sheep leave a stain,
His fox he accounts for again and again.

Where the fallows are dry, where manure has been thrown,
With a storm in the air, with the ground like a stone,
When we're all in a muddle, beat, baffled, and blown,
See! Bachelor has it! Bill, let him alone!

I once heard of a man, who was walking with his dog (a crop-eared cur, with a stump of a tail), being asked by a passer-by, "What do you call your dog?" The owner replied, "Well, sir, he was a grey-hound, and we called him 'Fly,' but we cropped his loogs

and coot off his tail and made a mastiff on him, and called him 'Lion.'" It is a simple transformation, but would not be applicable to a fox-hound. A fox-hound is a fox-hound, and, play what tricks you like with him, he will remain one. It might be expected that any race bred for so long to a fixed type and to a uniform standard of quality would show a want of individuality of character and temper, but this is not so. The disposition, virtues, and vices of every hound in a pack vary. A good huntsman knows the habits, temperament, weaknesses, and qualities of each separate member of his kennel. There are the bold and the timid, the too noisy and the too silent, the sulky and the quick-tempered, the affectionate and the indifferent, the meek and the rebellious, the greedy

and the fastidious, the quarrelsome and the kind, the light-hearted and the stout-hearted. There are hounds that can drive, and hounds that can stoop; the ones that can draw, and the ones that are handy to cast. There are some that combine all these virtues, and, alas! others that are guilty at times of babbling, riot, skirting, and turning a deaf ear to the horn. The object of huntsmen has never been to turn their packs into mechanical fox-killers — to do so would be to drag down the kennel to the level of the steel trap and vulpicide's gun.

Much of the charm of hunting consists in the style, grace, and neatness in which it is done. Hunting must be a pleasure to the eye; it should be picturesque and in harmony

with nature. The woodland or valley should echo back wild music, and the huntsman's horn and the whip's halloo should delight the ear and warm the blood. A badly-assorted pack, of all shapes and sizes, some of which carry a head, and others with a strain of Southern blood, as line hunters, might give more sport and kill more foxes than a better and handsomer pack of hounds. They would, however, never give the same satisfaction to the huntsman with a knowledge of the craft, or to those who appreciate the rules of the game.

There is a supreme pleasure in watching a level pack of well-turned, straight-legged hounds exhibiting their hunting powers and quality, as they only can be exhibited under the command of a good huntsman.

Uniformity of pace is necessary, uniformity in size pleases the eye. The power of instilling into fifteen or twenty-five couple that cohesiveness that makes them seem possessed, as it were, with one soul, combined with the ability to handle them, is an amazing example of man's capacity to subordinate animal nature to his own purposes. Colour is a secondary consideration, a matter of fancy; and a good fox-hound, like a good horse and a good candidate, cannot be a bad colour. Were I an M.F.H., I should never spend my time and money in trying to make a pack all badger-pied or Belvoir tan; provided they were well-assorted in other respects, the very variety in their colours would please me. The question of utility may, in some countries, influence the

colour. For instance, in a moorland district, where it is often impossible to live with hounds, it will be found that a few light-coloured hounds greatly minimise the risk of losing. On a dull day, if dark-coloured hounds get away over a moor, they may be easily lost, for they are extremely difficult to see on the heather.

To all lovers of hunting, if not to all hunting-men (and great is the difference), the animal which alone makes the chase possible is an interesting study from the moment he comes into the world. There is something that appeals to our tenderer feelings when we contemplate the very young, whether it be a little child or a puppy. No more cruel beasts exist than those of the cat species, from the spotted pard to the

household tabby, yet few can resist the sensation of fondness for the lion's cub, or puss's kittens. Their helplessness as well as the beauty and jolly roundness of the little things go to our heart ; and, it may be, the pity that is akin to love affects us, when we think of the battle of life that lies before these innocents. I confess to these sentiments when I watch the little black, white, and tan whelps lying beside the fond mother in the paddock by the kennels. How blissfully ignorant these are of the immediate future before them, and of what they have to go through before education fits them for their glorious calling ! In a few weeks they will be taken from the sheltering care of the dam and sent to distant walks, their little sides red and sore

with the cruel branding-iron. Those which get through all the diseases and disasters peculiar to puppyhood will enjoy the happy period of freedom till the day arrives when they are brought in from their walks. Then begins the hard discipline of life. Their ears are rounded, their names have often to be relearned, they are made to submit to the severe but necessary routine of the kennel. Then comes the time when they learn, with rating and great expenditure of whip-cord, what "ware hare," "ware sheep," "ware horse," and much else besides means,—till that supreme moment when their future is decided, and the awful question is answered whether they are worthy to be entered with the chosen few, or drafted with the condemned. Among the hounds that are

drafted, some will be put down as useless; others may be put aside, for failing only by the standard of height, colour, or type, and yet may be of the greatest value to other packs. At the present day the leading breeders of hounds pay most minute attention to symmetry, and cast every dog or bitch that is not straight or that does not come up to a very high standard. Many cultivate a type showing immense bone; but though a hound has legs as straight as an arrow, feet as round as a cat's, and bone like a lion, he is useless if he has not the quality to go the pace, a nose to hunt with, and a voice that proclaims the true gospel. There is no doubt that to obtain wearing and working qualities, with uniformity of type, the safest line to follow in breeding hounds

for hunting is the middle size. Such hounds will be big enough to go through dirt, and not too big to draw and run in cover. Were I an M.F.H., ambitious to distinguish myself at the Peterborough Show, I confess I should be puzzled to know how to do it, for the hounds that go to Peterborough are the selected few from thousands that go to walk. It probably is within the mark to say that, over an average of years, a Master who sends out sixty to eighty couple of puppies considers that he is fortunate if, out of this number, there are ten couple that come up to the standard at which he aims. Out of these he can only hope now and again to find a couple whose merit is so evenly balanced as to give a chance of success in the show ring ; and when in a lucky year he thinks he

has the prize in view, there may be the misfortune of just missing the individual taste of the judges in such a matter as condition. Some judges will condemn hounds for being too fat, others for being too light. It may appear as absurd to favour a fat hound as it would be to back a fat horse out of training against a properly trained one. Yet it must be admitted that there are good judges, who like to see hounds fat,—why, I will not venture to say, for, with all respect to superior authority, it has always appeared to me that fat is out of place where hard work is required. It is a pitiable sight, when cub-hunting on a hot morning in August or September, to see a lot of panting suet-puddings hanging about outside the covert; it is equally ugly to watch a lot of gorged

dogs or bitches refusing to break up a fox. Besides, after a few days of this sort of work, the fat laid on with such an expenditure of time and attention has melted away, and you have a pack even lighter in condition than the one which has been kept in hard flesh, carefully exercised, and made fit and keen to go straight to work.

The proper career of a fox-hound, from his birth to his death, might be described thus : I would have him bred from parents in the prime of life, that have themselves not only all the chief points of fox-hound symmetry and substance, but the tried qualities of pace, nose, and tongue ; and sent to a farm walk where a hound is loved and cared for, where new milk is liberally given to the little lodger, and liberty to play, gallop

and hunt at his own sweet will is allowed. We all know what mischief the fox-hound puppy, like the human puppy, is capable of; and many of us have had expensive, if entertaining, experiences of his youthful manners. We have seen our turkey hens, our peacocks, or our poultry the victims of his sporting proclivities. We have seen our tablecloths, curtains, and doormats worried and tattered in a manner prophetic of the style in which the miscreant, when he grows into a hound, will treat poor Reynard; we have wrung our hands while he drew the flower-garden; and yet, while we have soundly rated him, we have laughed over these domestic tragedies. I love to see a wild puppy; I like to see him with a leveret in his mouth after he has tow-rowed through

the pheasant covert; for I know that all his hunting and worrying instincts can be controlled when he is finally enlisted in the ranks, but can never be put into him unless they are there to begin with. Were my pup treated as I would have him treated, he should neither be rounded nor branded. The former is all but useless, while the tattooing of the inside of the ear with the initial letter of the pack and the litter number, is a more humane and simpler, as well as a more complete and lasting mark than that made with the branding-iron.

When my pup arrives, I would wish to be quite clear about his name, so that he may not have to relearn it when he goes back to the kennels. This summer I saw a pup walked by a neighbour of mine, who

answered while at walk to the name of "Ree-Torrick," and when he was "sent in" had, no doubt, to discover, through much rating, that his name was "Rhetoric." On the other hand, I knew a pup called "Vagrant," which was always called after he was entered "Vagerrant"; so, after all, we may agree with Peter Beckford's huntsman, who evidently considered that as long as a hound answered to his name, it made no difference what he was called, for being asked the name of a young hound, he said it was "Lyman." "Lyman?" said his master. "Why, James, what does Lyman mean?" "Lord, sir!" replied James; "what does anything mean?"

But now my pup has grown into a young hound, and has, with the help of a good

constitution, a warm lodging, and a generous diet, withstood the distemper. Then the day comes when he must leave the shelter of his home, and the caressing care of those who have watched over his puppyhood, and go to school. As with the schoolboy, so with young Wrangler; he will find compensation in the company of his many companions for the routine and monotony of kennel life.

Wrangler enters the kennels, receiving very much the same treatment, and being as thoroughly inspected, as any "new boy" ever was. For a time his stern droops, and he feels lost and cowed; but after standing a certain amount of rough play, he shows his mettle, asserts himself, and holds his own amongst the new arrivals. The

strange, prisonlike impression of his new quarters wears off; he begins to appreciate the cleanliness and order that guarantee all that is necessary for health and comfort; but many a time he hears his name, and often he feels the whip, before his wild nature is brought to bend to the discipline of the kennel. The summer months are at last over; Wrangler has learned to go in couples; then to pass through the sheep without thinking of mutton; and though in his heart he dearly loves the scent of a hare, he has had the lesson "ware hare" writ so distinctly on his back that there is no fear of his forgetting it. And now our hero makes his début as a fox-hound, and is blooded. The very first day he is out, curiosity and desire to see what is doing

tempt him into the covert. He is all excitement as the old hounds speak, he follows hard, and quickly learns to stoop to the new scent. The season slips by, and Wrangler has taken his place in the van. He has learned to love a scent, and he is keen in the struggle to find and proclaim it, and when the primrose and "stinking violets" announce that hunting days are over, he can show a few goodly scars around his youthful nose. But see him the next season, as the horses go kennel fadge to the meet, slipping along with both ends up; look at his waving stern and impatient eye during the vexing delay before a move is made; mark him as he races to the covert and bustles through the whins; hark, as with his full and musical voice he gives the

delightful news that a fox is found; watch him as he flies to the view-halloo, tops the fence, shoots right and left like a sky-rocket, till he has the line, and then bless him as he races away with his head up and stern down. "Yonder he goes," but the pack need never a word. The loud cry sinks to that modified chorus that proclaims that it is real business, and there is Wrangler driving ahead in the first bunch. Over the grass they race, through and over the fence in the fallow, down the furrow Wrangler leads them, throwing now and again a full, confident note. Away they stream, and if in the excitement of the hot pursuit he flashes over the scent for a moment, one swift fling and he has it again. The field is growing thinner as the miles of grass and plough are covered, and

the best pack in England would begin to tail! But the game is over. They run from scent to view, Wrangler's bristles are up, and you

> may swear it's who-hoop,
> For he'll dash at his fox like a hawk in her stoop,
> And he carries the head marching home to his soup.

And many and oftentimes will Wrangler make a run, till he, too, has, like every dog, had his day. The Master's heart is steeled, he gives the order (who knows with what regret?), and another hound takes his place with the flying black, white, and tan!

IV

HARE-HUNTING



MR. TOM HILL AND UNDERGRADUATE.

Scene in a Cambridge Stable Yard. From a sketch by C. M. Newton

IV

"By inclination I never was a hare-hunter; I followed this diversion more for air and exercise than for amusement, and if I could have persuaded myself to ride on the turnpike road to the three-mile stone and back again, I should have thought I had no need of a pack of harriers." PETER BECKFORD.

I OWE too many pleasant hours to hunting hares to damn the sport with faint praise, but, kind reader, if you notice a want of enthusiasm in the following chapter, pray do not ascribe it so much to my sympathy with the quotation that heads this article, as to my desire to pose

as an impartial critic. Silence, care, and science are the qualities that a hare-hunter should pride himself on; youth and high spirits, eagerness and impetuosity are the life and soul of fox-hunting — dangerous qualities in the chase of the timid little hare. I have had many a day with beagles and harriers—many a happy one; and yet in fairness I must make the confession that the days I enjoyed best were those when they got on to a fox. Ah! I fear if I made a clean breast of it, I should have to tell of days when my brother (who had a fine little cry of beagles) and I used to get up before daybreak, mount our horses, and hie off to the moors by ourselves, out of the ear of the sleeping world, to give a belated marauder a jolly good dusting before he

made his distant and unstopped earth ; and, more rarely perhaps, the eternal craving for "a run" was so great that a man with a bag shook "something" out of it in a lonely spot. Dear me! I could tell some tales. I have in my mind's eye a day when my brother, with another more famous master of harriers (now, like some others, an M.F.H.), and myself were beaten by the little hounds as they raced away over the moors after an extraordinarily fine-smelling fox ; but I must check myself, or my style will degenerate into that of a fox-hunter's.

After all, I have a conviction that many a green-coated gentleman has a sneaking sympathy with my sins and want of orthodoxy. If these lines meet the eye of any

hare-hunter, whose indignation and contempt is becoming too strong for words at the levity with which I speak of his sport, let him keep cool and take comfort, for have not I, as prescribed by the ancient rules of the Cleveland Hunt Club, laid my right hand on the hunting-horn and solemnly declared myself to be "no enemy to fox-hunting and harriers." Let me answer such an one that I, like him, regard the man who is so innocent of sport that he declares the triumph over the timid hare to be poor, as an ignorant simpleton; and if any one with superior airs were to hazard such a statement to me, my reply would be "All right, my boy! you try your hand on an old buck hare on a cold scenting day in February, on horseback, if you like; or, if that is too easy, get off and

hunt them on foot, be up to them, see them from start to finish, and tell me how you got on and what you think of it."

Personally, were I to criticise hare-hunting, I should say that too much of the chief diversion is the monopoly of the huntsmen — certainly the days I have thoroughly enjoyed have been those when I carried the horn myself. Again, with fast harriers or 20-inch fox-hounds, you must ride, but then you would do better with fox-hounds. If you went on foot, nature must have been lavish in her gifts if you have the physical power, courage, and endurance to enable you to keep near enough to see the beautiful detail of harrier work; and, finally, when you have killed your hare, it is rather a miserable-looking trophy that

is yours. You may ornament your smoking-room with your hares' heads, but you alone will feel that they are appropriate mural decorations; for your friends a few lop-eared rabbits would be more interesting.

I notice that all authorities on this subject dwell on the fact that hare-hunting is an ancient sport; that old writers describe with great ingenuity and veracity all the qualities and ways of this clever little beast. Some of these descriptions are most quaint, for example, the following:—"There are four kind of Hares: some live in the Mountains, some in the Fields, some in the Marshes, some everywhere, without any place of abode. They of the Mountains are most swift, they of the Fields less nimble, they of the Marshes most slow, and the wandering

Hares are most dangerous to follow." The habits noted by the naturalist-sportsmen of this period are as wonderful, and bespeak as much observation, with almost as excellent results, as those given by certain writers on natural history of our own day; for instance, we are told of the hare: "Her ears lead her the way in her chase, for with one of them she hearkeneth to the cry of the dogs, and the other she stretches forth like a sail to hasten her course." . . . "Tho' their sight be dim, yet have they *visum indefessum.*" . . . "When they watch they shut their Eyes, when they sleep they open them." . . . In these good old times they used the correct terms for all the proceedings of the chase, and for every habit and description of each and several kind of beast they had the appro-

priate language. The hare was a beast of "venery," and her meat "venison"; whilst, for dislodging a hart, you used the word "unharbour," for a buck "rouse"; you "start" a hare, "rear" the boar, and "unkennel" the fox. When once the hare is on foot, if she takes the open field, she "soreth"; when she winds about, she "doubleth"; she "pricketh" on the road, and you "trace" her in the snow. Hounds "hunt change," "hunt counter," "draw amiss," "hunt the foil"; when first they find, they "challenge." If they are assisted by a relay of hounds, it is called a "vauntlay"; if the hare tries a place and gives it up, it is called a "blemish." When hounds kill, and the hare or any part is given to them, it is the "reward." The hare was

always reckoned among the beasts of chase, and sometimes as the "king of beasts"; her order amongst beasts of venery came third or first, according to the fancy of the period, but always far ahead of the fox, which was vermin. Here is one list of the "Beasts of venery." "Hart, hinde, hare, wild boar, wolf. Beasts for hunting: ye hare, hart, wolf, wild boar. Beasts for the chase: ye buck, ye doe, fox, marten, roe. Beasts which afford greate dysporte: badger, wild cat, otter."

It is interesting, I mean for a fox-hunter, to try and discover why the hare was so much preferred to the fox by the sportsmen of two hundred years ago. One of them gives this reason: "The Fox never flies far before the Hounds, trusting not on his Legs,

Strength or Champion ground [champaign = open country] but strongest Coverts," and "when he can no longer stand up before the Hounds, he then taketh Earth, and then must he be digged out." From these two sentences it is obvious that harriers, accustomed as they were to find their game in the open country, had not developed the habit of drawing thick coverts, and were probably poor hands at bustling a fox in a whin cover and at forcing him out. Indeed, we find that they were not always good at finding a hare in the open, for it was a custom to employ "hare-finders," and Peter Beckford, though he admits paying two guineas in a single day to the men who were thus employed, laments the demoralisation of hounds, consequent on the custom making



MISS LAVENDER PEASE ON "ZACCHEUS."

From a painting by Mr. Heywood Hardy.

them bad finders. But there were other reasons. Hares were "game"; they were protected under the Game Laws and by special statutes, such as that of 15 Henry VIII. cap. 18, which made it a penal offence to destroy hares in the snow. The hare was, moreover, ubiquitous, whilst foxes were vermin, and regarded as noxious animals with a price on their heads, fixed by law or local custom — they were scarce and held in contempt when packs of hounds first came in vogue.

Since penning this sentence I have turned over my Beckford. He says: "The hounds most likely to show you sport are between the large, slow-hunting harrier and the little fox-beagle. The former are too dull, too heavy, and too slow; the latter too

lively, too light, and too fleet." He thinks that if the day is long enough you might kill with the first species, and if the country was deep and wet, the others might be drowned. Beckford bred for many years an "infinity of hounds" before he got what he wanted, but at last he had the pleasure to see them "very handsome," "small yet bony," after which, he cynically remarks, "when they were thus perfect, I did as many others do, I parted with them."

Again, the hounds of those earlier days were not, in point of pace and quality, equal to hunting such wild foxes as there were. It was only as the small harriers were improved into the type of what we call fox-hounds, that hunting-men realised that fox-hunting was a high-class sport. Harriers

were first turned into regular fox-hounds about the year 1740. From this date, then, we can begin to class hounds into two divisions: the harriers, kept small, active, but slow, and, above all, sure with their noses; and those improved in size, gradually acquiring the dash and pace necessary for pursuing the fox. Success in hare-hunting depends more on perseverance; that in fox-hunting, on pace. It is curious to note that the old harrier type is being destroyed. The slow, deep-mouthed southern hound, the beagle, and the light, active, snipey-nosed harrier are going out before the modern craze to have harriers dwarf fox-hounds. My own idea is that no sport can be obtained equal to that which was afforded by harriers of the stamp that distinguished the pack

until lately hunted by Mr. Robert Fellowes, of Shotesman,—little beauties, all quality and activity, not too fast and flighty to hunt a cold line or a doubling hare, and yet able to drive along when the opportunity arrived, and requiring a good hunter under one when they meant going. It may be replied that in adopting the dwarf fox-hound type, present Masters are reverting to a still older standard. I readily admit it. Indeed, I was recently looking at a print of Mr. Astley's harriers in 1810, in which they are something like "dwarf fox-hounds," but they *are* "dwarf," and, behold, a terrier accompanies the pack, telling the tale that they hunted the fox as well as the hare. If the old type of hound had answered its purpose, those generations which were hare-hunters

rather than fox-hunters would not have abandoned the dwarf fox-hound type for that which was properly regarded as pure harrier. It is more than doubtful if harriers ought to be more than eighteen inches high; and beagles, for following on foot, should not exceed fourteen inches.

Certainly hare-hunting affords the greatest scope for the huntsman's craft and the finest exhibition of hound work. The hare is really a much more *rusé* animal than the fox; she can steal away better, and, once started, there is no end to her wiles and dodges. She runs craftily and cunningly, doubling back on her own foil, pricking her way down watery furrows, or lobbing along the high road. She will "squat" or "clap" just as hounds are carrying a head, or

turn out a fresh hare ; if her pursuers overshoot her, she will sneak back in the least expected direction. Hare-hunters are fond of talking about straight-necked hares. My experience has been unfortunate. I have not seen many good points made by hares, and it is not in the straight run that the art of the huntsman and the virtues of the harrier are tested and brought into play. To enjoy the regular sport with a pack, you must have a keen appreciation of all the niceties of the game, and be able to watch with pleasure all the ins and outs, the windings and twistings so neatly unravelled with such a pretty hubbub of bass and treble music from the busy little hounds. There is a joy quite of its own in the cry of harriers and beagles (I am not speaking of

dwarf fox-hounds). A minute's silence at the fault, the competition of all the little beauties casting round—a sight delightful to the eye; —then a full note of the pure truth, the rush up to the speaking hound, the chorus of consent from a score of throats, swelling to the full cry of the whole pack as they go driving away as if possessed by one soul—a sound delightful to the ears, and not exactly described to me by a farmer as "joost like a flock o' craws gettin' out ov a tater field."

Every man has a right to his own opinion, and mine is that the perfection of hare-hunting is with beagles. The average hare is overmatched by the modern harrier. The beagle is not too fast, his nose is finer, he far excels the harrier in vigilance, energy, and persistency, whilst the music of a pack

of beagles is unequalled. But we live in fast times; we have not the leisure even to enjoy the time it takes for a pack of 10 or 11-inch beagles to trace and puzzle out the course of a hare with beautiful exactness till their perseverance is at length rewarded. We must find a hare at once, and kill her in a few minutes, and, if she is lost, find another without waste of time. This, however, is not the spirit of hare-hunting, but the fever of our day. As a spectacle, as a wonder, and an exhibition of the marvellous senses and powers with which nature has endowed both hare and hound, give me a pack of beagles at work. The present generation of followers of harriers are scarcely aware of the perfection to which beagles can be brought, and how undefeated even a 10-inch

pack can prove itself to be with the best of hares. I do not suppose there exists to-day a pack like that of Mr. Honeywood's, fifty or sixty years ago, not a hound above 10 inches, all level, and every one pure white, a perfect little lot. One contemporary writer said: "It is quite beyond credence the number of hares they kill in the course of a season. When running with a good scent, they might belong to the Fairy Queen, so small, fast, and handsome are they."

Hare-hunting ought to preserve an honoured place amongst our national sports. For the young on foot it is a manly and healthy pursuit; for those who have to ride, a pleasant and pretty pastime. It gives those whose stud is too limited for fox-hunting an opportunity of sharing the incom-

parable pleasures of the chase. The man on foot, if wind and limb will not allow him to be with them, can see much of the game from the hill-top, if not from the gate-post; while the man on his only mount may see every detail of the hunt and have his three days a week; he has, too, one advantage over the fox-hunter, that he is more sure of his entertainment. His disappointments are fewer, for he does not expect a 9-mile point or forty minutes racing across country. It is a sport for rich and poor, for tender youth and old age, and for all those who enjoy the niceties of the huntsman's craft tested at its highest.

V

FOX-HUNTING



DRAG HUNTING, CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY, 1879

From a sketch by C. M. Newton.

V

"Hunting is the sport of kings, the image of war without its guilt, with only five-and-twenty per cent. of the danger."

SO John Jorrocks felt and said; but in his oratorical effort to glorify hunting he both over- and under-did his figures of rhetoric—for though stag-hunting, so long as we have the buck-hounds, may yet be a royal sport in Old England, the whole line of crowned heads that have done us the honour of sitting on our throne would repudiate fox-hunting as the sport of kings,

while the people would claim it for their own. It is the privilege of no class; its constitution is republican, founded and living on liberty, equality, and fraternity. Fox-hunting has grown out of ill-repute during the last two centuries, and has long been placed first in popular affection. Good Queen Bess,[1] by a statute (8 Eliz. cap. 15) "for killing of verming as foxes and such like," gave expression to her people's wishes, and provided a machinery of rewards for the head of every "fox" or "gray" (badger); whilst St. John, in his speech on the trial of Strafford, makes the blood of the modern sportsman run cold as he cries out: "It is true we give law to hares and deer because

[1] *Vide* Turton's "The Honor and Forest of Pickering," *North Riding Records.*

they be beasts of chase. It was never accounted either cruelty or foul play to knock foxes and wolves on the head as they can be found, because these be beasts of prey." Mr. R. B. Turton, the editor of *The North Riding Quarter Sessions Records* (from whom I quote), truly remarks that, however shocking to our feelings, fox-hunting seems to have occupied somewhat the same position in this period that rat-catching does now. The statute of Elizabeth just referred to remained on the Statute-Book till 1863, and was actually in operation in Cleveland at least as late as 1847. There are in the Register and Churchwarden accounts for Lythe many entries of the rewards paid by the parish for "werment," from 1705 to 1847. A few extracts will suffice for my

object, which is to find some excuse for the illegitimate proceedings that have been continued even to my own day in certain outlying districts of the Cleveland Hunt.

1706.—Ugthorpe quarter—for 14 fullmor[1] heads .	0	04	8
Newton—for 11 fullmor and 3 fox heads .	0	12	8
Barnby—6 fullmor heads	0	02	0
Lythe—3 fox heads and 6 fullmor heads .	0	11	0
1787.—To 10 fox heads, 2 at Kettleness, 1 at Mickleby, 1 at Ugthorpe, 3 at Goldsbro', and 3 catched in a trap at Mulgrave Castle .	2	0	0

(We still know of the trap in which these foxes were "catched"!)

1846.—1 jackal head	0	8	0
5 fox heads	1	0	0
1847.—(Last entry) 1 fox head	0	4	0

From a study of the many entries similar to the above, it appears that the price set on

[1] Foumart, foulmart, or polecat.

a fox's head in Cleveland was, in the earlier period, 3s., and in the present century 4s. The "jackal head" is a mystery that I cannot pretend to solve; the only jackal I ever heard of in Cleveland being a tame one that I imported from Africa, which is living and thriving to-day, after several years of domestic life in anything but an African climate. When I was a boy, I was told by a very old sporting yeoman farmer, that it was the custom in other days, after a kill with the "Roxby and Cleveland" hounds, to go to the parson with the head, get the head money, and then to adjourn to the nearest public-house and expend the price of blood over a bowl of punch, the flavour of which was heightened by the addition of a pad, the brush, or the whole head to the mixture.

This, I have no doubt, might correctly be described as strong drink.

But to hark back on the line for a moment. I feel I must qualify my opening paragraph, for I have suddenly remembered a passage I lately read in one of the Reports of the Historical MSS. Commission, which both shows that royalty in the seventeenth century countenanced fox-hunting, and that it is of greater antiquity than some modern authors generally suppose. Here is the extract taken from a Newsletter, November 17, 1674: "11th, on Saturday or Sunday (!) next His Royal Highness and the Duke of Monmouth and divers persons of quality go to Chichester, where they are to lodge in the Bishop's (!) Palace, and expect all the gentry of the neighbourhood to repair

with their dogs for seven or eight days' fox-hunting." It must have been a curious sight on that Sunday morning to see His Royal Highness, the Duke, the Bishop, the divers persons of quality, with their dogs, at the palace—and one can picture the appearance of the "dogs," collected from all parts of the country, of all shapes and sizes.

But I am hanging on the line, if not dwelling in covert, and all this was meant to be by way of saying that these old-fashioned ideas of fox-hunting seem to have penetrated, to some extent at least, to the days when I first hunted with the Cleveland hounds. I can testify that to many of the sportsmen on foot, even to many of the farmers on horseback, the fox was certainly

in the class of "verming and such like," and that they considered it a most magnanimous proceeding, instead of "to knock" foxes on the head as they can be found, because these be beasts of prey, "to shake him out of a bag and collect all the dogs," and have a "hoont."

The reader must not be too hard on them; they were hard-working farmers, with small means, who could not afford the serious depredations that they suffered from foxes amongst their moor sheep, and especially amongst their lambs in the spring. There was no M.F.H., in the modern sense. They kept a few hounds, one here and one there, which were collected or "blown up" on hunting days, and they managed their sport in a very homely and simple fashion,

many of them never having a horse to ride, and following on foot. For the man on foot with fox-hounds I have the most profound respect and admiration. I mean, of course, the genuine article,—not the loafer with a club and a hare-pocket in the inside of his coat, nor the determined and ignorant sightseer, who stands in the middle of the field next the whin covert, displaying British independence when asked to "come in," or who obstinately sits on a gate hallooing every time a fox attempts to break; but the dauntless man whose love of the sport and hound work is such that he counts as nothing aching limbs and blowing bellows, nor the weary tramp home, if he can only get a look in.

It is not the footman who alone sins

through carelessness and ignorance — in some riding-men the latter quality seems invincible. I knew one, a regular follower of hounds, who went out with Lord Zetland's and finished with the Hurworth, without ever discovering that he had changed packs. Such good fellows as the followers of hounds on foot ought to receive the fraternal welcome of their mounted colleagues in the field—whilst a kind word, instead of choice Billingsgate, will do more than restrain the ignorant sinner, and tend to his better understanding of what is required of him. Every man, as long as he respects the rules of the game, has a right to be there. It occurs to me, as I turn over the leaves of my hunting diary, that I was not always so patient with the footmen, as, for instance,

on December 26, 1881, when I record: "Monday, Hounds at Paradise Farm. A most inappropriate name for a most unfortunate day — the country flooded with foot people. The skyline black with them —a most horrible sight! We had soon a fox on foot, but, headed in every direction, he fell a victim to the mob's thirst for blood. A like horrible fate awaited the second fox on Guisborough Moor, above Bethel Slack; the spectacle of the hundreds round the corpse of the poor murdered brute, clamouring for fox-skin, was heartrending. What added to the mortification was the fact of the day being an ideal one, soft, cloudy, scenting. Some of the remarks I overheard tended to relieve the dark melancholy of the day. One delightful ruffian, with an

awful club, turned to another with a bludgeon in his hand. 'The dogs never gav oos a chance, they moordered him, not killed him.' Mr. —— nearly rode over one of the crowd, and on the nearly overridden one remonstrating in forcible language, soothed him with the remark, 'There'll be plenty more left when you're done for,' which, however unfeeling, was the naked truth. Another scene of this unhappy day that gave a momentary joy was that of two men on bare-backed, hairy-heeled farm horses with blinkers on. One said to the other, 'Blame it all! I wish we could get away from these foot people!'"

Years ago, when I was a boy, it was not a rare thing with the farmer's trencher-fed pack with which I hunted to turn a fox down

in the moorland district where grouse-preserving or sheep-farming made a find always uncertain and often impossible. Thirteen minutes was the law allowed, and when time was called, hounds were laid on. There is no denying that if pace and distance are the only desiderata, a stout old moor- or cliff-fox, turned down some distance from home, will give a better run than any you are likely to get by legitimate methods in a season. The blot on such a performance is not so much unfairness to the fox, for with thirteen minutes' law a good fox was more than often a match for the hounds, even when aniseed or turpentine had been applied to his pads. He had at least as good a chance of saving his bacon as if he had been found in the whin covert, where many a good fox

has been chopped before making his try for the open. No, it is not the pace of a run, the distance from point to point, or the perfection of the country, that make up the whole sport of hunting. The sport consists in the meeting of the hound and the animal hunted on nature's own terms in a free field with no favour, and in being there to see the struggle. And to the man with real hunting instinct, no steeplechase after aniseed or a bagman can give the satisfaction and delight of the success in accounting for a wild-bred fox, whether the day be bright or dull, the scent hot or cold. And while no one could derive greater enjoyment from the fast good thing over the pick of the country, more than half his pleasure is due to the feeling that the reward of a red-

letter day has been worked for honestly and is due to no resort to artifice.

Contrast the pleasure that the man with no idea beyond his boots, coat, tie, galloping and jumping, extracts from a day's hunting, with that which the man who is a genuine "hunter" obtains. Putting aside the social pleasures of the chase, the meeting of friends by the covert side, and the incidents of interest and amusement in the field, the pleasure of the one is dependent on being well mounted in a good country after a straight-necked fox; and he is an exacting and hypercritical follower of hounds. The other feels the longest day too short, and can enjoy hounds puzzling out a line, bustling a fox through woodlands, or driving him over a moor, with one idea upper-

most—to be there to see every detail of their work as if he were a hound himself. Weather, indifferent scent, bad countries, ugly fences, and even an imperfect mount, are but to him difficulties he can delight in fighting with. He rides to hunt; but he who hunts to ride will, as years pass by, find the bad days are too many, the good days too few, the country too familiar to ever taste the rapture and expectation that charmed his younger days: either he abandons the chase or comes out for air, exercise, and gossip. But from youth to age the other's interest never flags. When a boy the hounds are a wonder; the country is an immense and mysterious paradise; the hard man is his model; the huntsman his hero; and in every fox he sees the possi-

bility of the run of the season; truly the life with horse and hound is his ideal of earthly bliss. For him, as for us all, time brushes away the mysteries, and the scene loses its fresh enchantment. Hope is the richest treasure of warm-blooded youth, gilding each day with glorious possibilities, but the old enemy is gentler with him than with the other. He may no longer spring lightly on to the hunter with the wild eye and winging quarters, feeling equal to sending him along, no matter where, no matter how far—his eye kens each corner of the once unknown land, he has tasted all the joys and triumphs that the chase can give. The red-letter days, he knows, are few and far between, and when they come they but jog his memory of a better. But if his heart

no longer beats with the hot anticipation of the long ago, his experience gives him a conscious power, and an ability to appreciate niceties unnoticed by the crowd; his memory is a storehouse in which he delights to rummage. The melancholy that must accompany age, he, like others, may not escape from—the moments when he re-peoples his country with those who have gone, and remembers the voices that are heard no more. But the landscape from the covert side is all the dearer to him for the echo of voices long since stilled, and the cry of those hounds whose blood still flows in the streaming black and white and tan with whom he still holds a place.

Well, then, if it was almost like a habit in some districts, where foxes were systematic-

ally kept down, for a past generation to save the day's sport by resorting to a bagman, the reader must not be shocked if I confess to being a living witness to what in charity we may ascribe to an hereditary tendency. After all, there was more excuse for them than for some noblemen. They at least dug out the wild fox from the sea-cliffs, while the fashionable game preserver, or the titled vulpicide, purchased his fox in Leadenhall.

I have just turned up an old ballad which I have never seen in print, and as it touches on the subject, I may as well give it a place here, premising, however, that I cannot but think it is libellous, looking to the way in which subsequent bearers of the title of Lonsdale have associated

themselves with the best interests of real sport.

LORD LONSDALE'S HOUNDS: 1849–1850.

It was an Earl of ancient name
Who hunted the fox, but preferred him tame,
Though his sire had been a hunter free,
As bold as e'er rode o'er a grass countree.

The sire would mount his high-bred horse,
And view the wild fox from the hillside gorse;
The son goes down by a second-class train,
Worries a bagman, and home again.

'Tis half-past twelve by the railway clocks,
And the Earl has called for his horse and his fox;
And behind the Earl there rides the Earl's groom,
And then comes a man with a long birch broom,
Clad in the Earl's discarded breeches,
Who will tickle the fox when he comes to the ditches.

The Earl's admirers are ranged in Brown's yard,
They all wear top-boots and intend to ride hard;
Whether "wily fox" or timid hare
Be the game to-day, none of them care.

Well was it the Earl had called for his fox,
And brought it from Tring in a little deal box,
For three hours and more they drew for a hare,
But drew in vain! All was blank despair.
Then said the Earl to the elder Brown,
"Open your box and turn him down."

So they turned him down in Aylesbury vale,
In front of a fence called a post and a rail,
To suit the views of a certain gent,
Who rather liked "Rails,"[1] and thought he went.
Over the rails the first to fly
Was the gent of course, but the fox was shy,
And would have declined, but the Earl and his groom,
The huntsman and whip, and his man with the broom,
Two boys in a cart, and the Browns, Sam and John,
Wouldn't hear of his shirking, and drove him along.

A pleasant line the captive took,
Wouldn't have doubles, avoided the brook;
As you may imagine, he ran by rule,
Only taking the leaps he had learned at school.

[1] The "gent" named in verse six was a great speculator in railway shares.

Two hounds of Baron Rothschild's breed,
Unmatched for courage, breath, and speed,
Close on his flying traces came,
And nearly won the desperate game.
But just as the Earl was preparing to sound
The dreaded "whoo-whoop"—why, he ran to ground;
So they dug him out; and the Earl and his groom,
And the Browns and the gent and the man with the broom,
And the fox and the hounds are at Tring again,
And the Earl has gone back by the five o'clock train.

How well I remember some of those illegitimate days, and at this distance of time I can do no harm in telling tales of those with whom I was a *post facto* accomplice. Not only I, but the very hounds knew what was "up" when we met at Liverton. Hounds' heads all one way; ears cocked and sterns waving, and every now and again a dash of the wilder members of the pack, followed by cracking whips and hunt servants

galloping round the paddock. Such days remain clear in my memory. The fox generally had been procured overnight from the great sea-cliffs of Boulby, where it was dangerous for hounds to draw, and where many a leading hound has met his end with a last fearful fall of 600 feet into the North Sea. I recollect a particularly long and trying run, when, after a fast twenty minutes over the stiff enclosures between Moorsholm and Grinkle, and after crossing two of the deep gills that run up inland from the sea, our fox took the open moor, with some seven or eight survivors of the field in hot pursuit. His first point was Danby Beacon, and, keeping the high ridge of the moor for awhile, he turned south into the valley of the Esk. A very excellent

specimen of the Cleveland hunting farmer, George Codling, senior, who will after this lapse of time forgive me for naming him, had now the best of it, and beat me to Castleton Park, being clearly first up when hounds pulled down their fox on the very edge of the Esk River. I was there a moment after Codling, and struggled with him to reach the fox, now in deep water, in the midst of the swimming pack, for these were the days when men turned their horses adrift, and almost fought for the honour of the brush, which fell to him who took the fox from the hounds. In our scuffle at the water's edge, while we were using our hunting-crops as boat-hooks, I unintentionally knocked Codling's hat into the river, thinking little of such a trivial accident at such a

moment; but not so Mr. Codling, who was hot with excitement, and annoyed by my efforts, which so far had only resulted in boat-hooking the fox into deeper waters. To lose the brush and his hat was too much, and though it was sleeting and bitterly cold, we both of us had difficulty in keeping our language at a decent temperature. I was too intent on my fishing, being up to the waist and having a tug of war with the hounds over the disputed trophy, to much heed the noise of my companion. When, at last, after a successful dive for the remains, I regained the bank with the head, backbone, and brush, I thought that he would be appeased when I handed him the brush, for by this time I was cool enough, dripping and shaking all over; but not a bit of it:

the brush, of course, was his before, so there was nothing generous in my handing it to him. It was only adding insult to injury, to hand him a brush as if I was presenting a testimonial. Well, anything for peace and quietness, so in I went again for his hat, but still all efforts to make myself agreeable were in vain. What was the use to him of a hat full of mud and water on a coarse day like that? As we were wet through, and covered with bog mud, I thought a wet and muddy tile was all that any reasonable man had a right to expect, but I think I promised him a new hat; if I have never given him one (and my memory fails me on this point), I shall be most happy to do so now. I am certain of this, that he demanded a new hat all the way homewards.

What opportunities artists miss! I can imagine no more comical scene for a looker-on. Codling, in hatless wrath, with the draggled brush so hardly earned and rescued, pouring curses on me, whilst I stood open-mouthed, blue, and shaking, with the dripping head in my hands, the hounds crouching and shivering and wretched around us, and the backbone of the fox lying between us—our horses disappearing on the horizon! I think what has stamped this day on my memory was the awful journey home in a blizzard with a tired horse. I hardly knew what I did, but in those days the head at my saddle, and the thought of the run, were ample compensation for all I had endured from the water, the weather, and the wrath of my successful

competitor. I think that the disrespect I showed to Mr. Codling's hat rather increased in the end the friendly relationship between him and myself. It formed a fresh link in our hunting association, and he was far too keen a sportsman himself not to forgive an excess of zeal on the part of another, even when it had gone the length of nearly putting him in after his hat.

VI

FOX-HUNTING

—continued

VI

Stags in the forest lie, hares in the valley—O!
Web-footed otters are speared in the lochs!
Beasts of the chase that are not worth a tally-ho!
All are surpassed by the gorse-cover fox.
Fishing, though pleasant,
I sing not at present,
Nor shooting the pheasant,
Nor fighting of cocks;
Song shall declare a way
How to drive care away,
Hunting the fox!

THE fox-hunter loves the morning with a cloudy sky and a touch of east in the wind, and, luckily for him, he lives in a land where he can get it. From Novem-

ber till April he is happy to live without the sun, and it is the little red rover that makes him more than content to stay at home, while his unlucky compatriots are chasing the sun to Monte Carlo or the banks of the Nile. There is a charm about English country life that is a full compensation for all the discomforts of a fickle climate. The inconstancy of the sun, and the variableness of our weather, prevent life in England from ever being monotonous. A hunting-man cannot go to bed with any certainty of being free from an exciting anxiety about the weather, any more than he can go to cover with any confidence that scent will be good or that a fox will run straight. He can get between the sheets, and let his fancy picture an ideal day's sport on the morrow, and

himself being well carried over the cream of the country; and yet, when he wakes, he hurries downstairs and on to the lawn with a stick, to poke about to see whether it will be possible to hunt at all.

If we could hook a salmon every time we made a good cast; if we could curl up the rocketing pheasant every time we pressed the trigger; if we could kill our stag every time we beaded him, there would be no pleasure and no satisfaction in such pursuits. No sport can give a greater variety of incident than fox-hunting, or such wondrous transformation scenes. Chance is the magic attraction of such pursuits; the element of the unknown the soul of all adventure.

All the surroundings of the chase minister to man's passion for novelty, change, ex-

citement, and to his love of movement, of display of colour, or of the picturesque. The scene in which each act takes place varies not only with the formation of the ground, the alternation of hill and vale, of woodland and field, but alters its dress with every month, or with the infinite changes wrought by sun and skies. The line of a fox may be guessed, but never counted on; the pace of a run may be fast or slow; the end may be near or far distant. Scent, as incomprehensible as woman, may be good, bad, or indifferent; and when you trust it, it may suddenly jilt you; when cold, may turn as suddenly hot. The ill fortune of a day may be turned by a happy hit of hound or huntsman, or a run lost by a careless halloo or an unlucky cast. Your place with

the pack will often depend on a decision taken quick as lightning at a critical moment, or your discomfiture arise from half a pound too much pull on your rein as you come up to a fence. All these, and a thousand other elements of chance, keep the fox-hunters' passion evergreen. The fisherman may weary of flogging the unresponding waters; the best shot, no matter how satisfactory his own performance, may feel sated with killing, grow disgusted at the shriek of dying hares, and have moments when he asks in vain for a logical defence of pleasure derived at the expense of wholesale slaughter and mutilation. There is no sport without blood, but there is no field sport with so little bloodshed about it as hunting. When the common fate

overtakes the little marauder of the night, it is usually after a well-matched struggle, and his end is swift as the lightning flash.

Every act in the drama on nature's stage is full of interest and life, from the moment that hounds burst like a flood through the kennel door, the huntsman astride his knowing horse shoves his horn into the case, and "whips" scramble into their saddles—until, when the Master has sounded "home," the last good-night has been answered as heads are turned in different directions, and the patter of the pack on the muddy road, and the echo of the horses' feet, fades on the ear as at kennel fadge they trot home in the dusk. And in the interval between the dawn and close of a hunting-day no man can tell what he may

do or what he may see; a wild racing ten minutes' burst, twenty-five minutes' glorious galloping and jumping, or fifty minutes over the broad vale. However many good things a man in a long life may see with hounds, he will never see two alike; each will make a different call on his valour or discretion, and yield some new experience of the wonderful power of a good horse.

There is a fine array of arguments made use of by those who think it necessary to defend hunting or to recommend it. The farmer may be told it is good for him to see his seeds ridden over and his fences gapped, and that barbed wire is the unpardonable sin referred to in Holy Writ; that it is good for him, because hunting will enable him to sell hay, oats, and straw, and provide horses

for his landlord's stud; and that his tolerance of damage will gain him the generous consideration of the proprietor of his fields; the statistician may marshal his figures and demonstrate the economic value of hunting to the provincial communities and the nation; the man with a liver may be recommended the exercise for his health; and the evolutionist may point out the progressive and physical development of man and horse that has resulted from this pastime of a country life. But hunting will never be pursued for utilitarian ends, or live because of the benefits it undoubtedly bestows on either the individual or the community. These apologies or commendations are the result of that solicitude that accompanies true love. The chase is so dear to the

hunter that he has always the dread upon him of losing it, as a lover's hopes are mixed with the fears of losing what in his eyes only makes life worth living. Love of hunting is a passion, and, like other passions, is unreasoning and illogical.

A man may marry, but does he love a woman because she brings him a fortune, because it is his duty to the community, or because he feels he is a better man in doing so? While his passion lasts he is indifferent to the superior beauty, accomplishments, or wealth of any other.

A man loves the air of a hunting morning, the horse he is astride of, the cry of the hounds, the sound of the horn, and the cheer of the chase without knowing why or wherefore; and though there be no reason for

it, the instinct is buried in the breasts of thousands of non-hunting people, and the undefined sympathy of public opinion causes it to countenance visible damage that it would never tolerate for any arguments, however convincing, of duty to country or indirect benefit to the individual. It is to any thinking being touching to see the patience and kindliness shown, by a class that cannot afford loss, to those who ride over their holdings in pursuit of pleasure, which is often done with too little consideration for those without whose passive support their sport must come to an end.

The question of wire has in many districts become a serious one, but let the hunting-man ask himself how he would regard the subject if his own livelihood and home

depended entirely on what he could make of one or two hundred acres of land, and he were asked to forego, for the pleasure of others, the substantial saving and economy that a particular kind of fencing would enable him to make. No man hates the sight of wire, or laments the invention of the hideous barbed variety, more than the writer; but it appears to him worse than unjust to abuse and upbraid the farmer who puts it up. In the first place, the landlord, who is more often a worse friend to hunting than the tenant, is the man to whom representation should be made. A farmer may say, My ability to pay my rent depends on my carrying out this, with other economies; and if an occupier does not hunt, the only proper way to prevent his putting up wire

is to compensate him for the loss which he incurs by foregoing his right to do so. The men who can afford thousands for the maintenance of their studs may be expected to respond to an appeal to find a few pounds to secure the existence of hunting. On the other hand, the farmer who places wire so as to be a trap, without notice, deserves the censure of all who dislike a mean or cruel deed. In the north of England there are few counties where wire is a serious inconvenience, and I know of none where it is a danger that is likely to entrap a man, save on the rarest occasions.

Not only does the non-hunting farmer deserve all the assistance that lies in the power of master and field to show to him, but the shooting tenant should equally be

the object of thoughtful and kindly consideration. Half the sins of hunting-men, and nearly every complaint on their part of being ill-used, are the result of their own thoughtlessness and carelessness. As life yields its experience, the similarity of the average human nature, whether a man be peer, commoner, or peasant, becomes more and more apparent, as does the magic power of charity, that best cure and preventive of bad blood. A little attention, a little effort towards acquaintance, a few minutes given up now and again to a friendly chat, a word or two indicating an interest in their sport, or even a courteous salutation whenever occasion offers from the Master and his friends, will turn opposition into genial welcome in nine cases out of ten. It should

be remembered that these men are brother-sportsmen; circumstances or the ties of business may have placed hunting out of their reach. Love of field sports has led many men to make pecuniary sacrifices to obtain shooting for themselves and their friends. There is many a hard-worked man of business whose sole recreation consists in a day snatched from the cares of his office, or earned by working overtime. He may have one covert, affording one or two days' sport out of the year, and he naturally looks forward to these rare occasions; but to have his little preserve rummaged by hounds, and himself abused for not having a fox always within it, will never teach him to love the fox-hunter. Great care should be used by an M.F.H. not to disturb and

draw such places without a courteous consideration of the shooting-tenant's convenience, and when this is done it will generally be found that the shooting-man generously responds to the desire not to spoil his sport. Little harm is done to game by running through a covert, and unless the Master knew that such a place was just about to be shot, he could not be expected in a good run to stop hounds. Necessity knows no law, and in a good thing, and in the heat of action, fox-hunters would be false to their calling to abandon the pursuit without a very strong reason. Where there is any danger of an annoyance to a covert owner, a polite letter, or, still better, a call to explain, will probably cause the aggrieved one to discount heavily his previous estimate of

damage done. There is little danger of misunderstanding between game-preservers and hunting-men so long as they cultivate a neighbourly feeling and are kind to each other's little weaknesses. Some of the best fox-preservers are game-preservers, and the best among these are not always those with the most extensive shooting. But where is the sum of all these generalities when the circumstances of each county differ? In some counties the game-preserver is a difficulty; in others, as in Norfolk, he has, with his armies in velveteen, kept fox-hunting almost off the land; in others there is little shooting and much hunting; in others again a good deal of both. In one hunt the very number who turn out, or a tactless Master, spoil the sport, while in another the field

consists, in the main, of farmers who take a neighbourly delight in riding over each other's holdings. Whenever you see a hunt where wheat and seeds are ridden over more ruthlessly than usual, you may be sure it is a farmer's country.

There are as many ways of hunting a country as there are styles of riding a horse. The object of one huntsman is to kill foxes, of another to give his field a run, of another to see hounds work. The character of the country itself decides in some degree whether hounds are to be left to themselves or handled. The great points and fine runs are for the open countries where coverts are few and foxes sufficient, but not too plentiful. In wild or rough countries, or in high-banked counties like Devonshire and Cornwall,

hounds must to a great extent be made self-reliant and left to hunt themselves. But fox-hunting, to be the real thing, must have dash and go. To spend half your life standing by a gorse watching a huntsman sauntering about, evidently equally pleased if he can catch a fox within its precincts as in the open; to march leisurely from one draw to the next; to see hounds kept to the skulking fox when old Cæsar has taken the open; to follow a pottering hunt through hand-gates and across fences, when the huntsman's course is pioneered by timber-felling and gap-making servants, is not hunting.

There are few ideal huntsmen. There is many a good kennel-huntsman, many a good rider to hounds who carries the horn; but they mostly fall into two categories, hound-

men or horsemen. What is wanted is the combination,—the man who can get anywhere with his hounds, who can infect the pack with his fire and dash while holding them in hand, who can throw their heads down or lift them, who never leaves them there at the critical check to mark the place where they had it last, and who, whilst rejoicing in the race for blood, can, when scent is catching and fallows are cold, keep himself in hand and enjoy the slow and patient unravelling of the puzzle. Swift and sure when he has the chance, slow but sure when needs must. A pack takes its cue from the huntsman, provided always he has a knowledge of his craft, for a pack will never heed a fool. A fast huntsman will make a fast pack; a pack handled by a dashing hunts-

man, if he be a huntsman, will drive; the slow huntsman will have slack hounds,—but there is less danger that a cautious and deliberate huntsman will spoil hounds or mar sport more than the man who is for ever galloping his hounds. Do not imagine that when I speak of a dashing huntsman I mean a noisy, hollering, horn-blowing, harum-scarum Hotspur; but one to whom hounds rush, knowing he means to give them sport; who goes sharp to cover, and into it as if he meant business; who expects, as soon as the clear view-halloo tells that a fox has "gone away," that, as he flies to the open, his whips will look sharp and get every eager hound to him; who intends that every man who wishes to go shall have the chance if he can give it them; and that till his fox is

accounted for, his place is with his flying beauties.

Much of the comfort and pleasure depends on the Master; and if huntsmen vary, how various are the types of Masters! There are the jolly familiar ones, and the "speak-to-me-if-you-dare-sir" sort; there are the military precision, and the no-discipline-at-all kind. There is the M.F.H. who notices none but his intimates, who does not take the trouble to recognise his field, or say "good-morning" to the farmer, or "thank you" to the man who opens the gate. There is the damning cursing, swearing species—with varieties: the one that swears from bad temper; the one that swears thinking it is professional; and the one that swears from pure excitement. The first sort is always offensive, the

second makes a mistake, and the last is sometimes amusing. I have heard remarkable language proceed from the mouths of M.F.H's., and heard them scream, bellow, and yell, sometimes with some cause, sometimes without. We can forgive it when it is the froth of enthusiasm. A friend of mine told me he heard a Master say to himself under his breath, while he watched his hounds eating their fox after a good run, with keen longing in his eyes, "Lucky devils. Now why the —— can't I do that?"

When following the same hounds, I heard a whip slanged by one of the field for not getting a gate open quicker. "Well, you are a blank fool," said the critic. "And so would you be a blank fool if you was called one every ten minutes." But unhappily the

expressions used by M.F.H's., when they throw their tongues, cannot always be considered fit for print. I heard a story once of a mail coachman who had been using such frightful language to his team that the passenger beside him at last remonstrated and said, "My friend, you should not use such language. Remember the patience of Job!" The coachman replied "Yes, sir; but did Job ever drive three blind 'uns and a bolter?" There is no doubt that a M.F.H. requires the patience of Job. His office at home, in the kennel, in the field is no sinecure; and few things try the temper more than to have worked hard to show sport, and then to see yourself defeated, and the enjoyment of your field spoiled by some individual act of thoughtlessness,

ignorance, or idiocy. I am always much more struck by the patience and forgiving disposition of masters than by their rough words. It is hard for the eager and impetuous, with every desire to give room to hounds, to have his forbearance rewarded by seeing some less scrupulous rider take his place. It is hard sometimes on a tearing flyer to get him pulled in at a moment's notice. But a follower of hounds knows when he has done wrong, and seldom does a man catch it without deserving it; and if he is a sportsman, whose zeal only has outrun its discretion, he may be sure of forgiveness.

This is not the time to debate whether fox-hunting has a long life before it in crowded little England. Its existence

depends on its popularity. As long as an Englishman loves a horse and a hound, as long as hunting-men maintain the principles of equality and fraternity in the hunting-field, are generous to those who afford them the sport, are willing to give when they take, are considerate and kindly in their behaviour to all and every class with whom they associate—so long will the country be proud of its packs, and its people enjoy the sight of the scarlet coats coming by road and bridle-path, and public opinion will check the gin and gun of those who have a vulpicidal tendency. Like all the best amongst our institutions, fox-hunting is secure so long as it is broad based upon the people's will.

VII

CUB-HUNTING



From a Sketch by the late Sir Frank Lockwood.

VII

THERE hangs in the drawing-room of Skelton Castle, in Cleveland, a picture of Heywood Hardy's, which illustrates to the full that artist's wonderful power in combining the life and colour of a sporting subject with the poetry of English scenery. We are accustomed to many varieties of hunting pictures, but how few are worthy of the painter's art. There is a dreadful family likeness amongst them—so many pink-faced sportsmen in tall hats and vermilion coats, so many white pairs of

breeches, and so many tri-colour hounds. Sometimes we have these objects arranged standing at a meet, as if to be photographed. As we gaze, we are sad to think that they will continue to stand till time rots the canvas, and how long time will be about it; that those wooden hounds will never be thrown into cover; that the pink-faced huntsman in the scarlet coat will never get the horn, which he clutches in his dog-skinned hand, to his mouth; and that all those straight-limbed, clean-legged horses will never dash a speck of mud on to those spotless boots and awfully white breeches! But a more ambitious artist, wrestling with his difficult but popular subject, will make his red-coats leap over insignificant or impossible fences; he will have his hounds

flying out of the picture to meet you as they dash over a rail or thread a fence; and will create not only a remarkable study in foreshortening of hounds, but one that fills the onlooker with amazement at the courage of the artist who, in order to make his study, must have placed himself and his canvas betwixt fox and hound, and braved the rush and charge of the yelling pack. The fox is often introduced upon the scene, that fox we so frequently hear about, "dead beat, with his tongue hanging out," but so beautifully clean that one wonders where is that mudless country in which, instead of dashing at a draggled fox with his back up, the hounds follow this galloping and cleanly animal, with his mouth wide open and, of course, his tongue hanging out. How different is the

artist's treatment of his subject in the picture at Skelton Castle. There is no fox, there is not a fence, there is not a covert, there is not even a picturesque top-hat or top-boot. The picture is called "A Summer's Day in Cleveland," and the scene is on the beach, —hounds swimming, splashing, and dashing out of a tidal pool on a sunny morning, accompanied by the old squire on a pony, the young squire (master and huntsman), and two servants in pink exercising coats, the picture combining the beautiful animation of the hounds with a wonderful harmony of colour and poetry of scene. Behind, the sparkling splash and spray, in the foreground are the breakers, whose white foam fades into the deeper grey of the North Sea and then into the pale blue of a summer sky,

while beyond loom the rugged rocks of Huntcliffe Nab. As an admirer of the study, I can look long at this wonderful example of catching and fixing for ever the prettiness of a scene of a summer's morning; but as a sportsman I begin to get impatient with the sun, and to wish that the hounds will be done splashing and "come on out of that"; that the master would change his straw hat (which certainly is better in the picture than a splash of black velvet) for his cap, and let us get up from the beach and go and find a fox.

As August draws to a close, we know that, now the reapers are silent and the stubbles are bare, we shall soon be once more astride of our equine companions in the chase, that we shall see the covert

quivering and shaking, and sterns waving among the whins. Cub-hunting is a most excellent and pleasant introduction to the serious business of the season. We all—foxes, hounds, horses, and men — require the preparation and the bustling about that the early hours of September and October place within our reach. Much of the season's success depends on how the pack is used during these two months. A pack, as someone has said, is made or marred in cub-hunting. After the 1st November there is comparatively little opportunity for educating either cubs or puppies.

A man does not go to covert side in September to ride across country; he goes to realise with his own eyes and ears the delightful fact that another hunting-season

has begun, to inhale the fresh air of the early morning, to exercise his unconditioned horse, and to join those choice spirits who love the cry of hounds better than their pillows. He knows that it will be "Tally-ho back! tally-ho back!" all the morning, and if, by a lucky chance, a cub is followed into the open air for ten minutes, and he gets a gallop, it is but a *hors d'œuvre* to whet his appetite for better and more substantial things to follow, and to serve as a reminder to his horse, when blind ditches entrap him, that a good hunter must take care where he puts his feet, and jump big when the boundary between fence and field is undefined. A master is seldom hampered by an unwieldy "field" when he meets at six o'clock. Those who are out at that time

are likely to be sportsmen, and able to appreciate the fact that all are there for educational purposes.

Those who, when the season is in full swing, are crowding and watching for a get away and a good start, and causing throughout the day untold anxiety to the huntsmen, are now in shooting-caps and leggings, chatting and indulging in gossip and chaff in a manner that would be regarded as unprofessional when in tall hats and top-boots. Probably nothing exasperates a hunting-man more than when, on the tip-toe of expectancy, as hounds speak in covert, he is compelled to listen to some bore who thinks the occasion suitable for airing his views on local or Imperial politics, or for relating his own

exploits of valour the day you were not out. Business and politics should never be permitted as subjects of conversation in the hunting-field, not even during cub-hunting, when any other topic may certainly be tolerated, if not encouraged. One of the secondary pleasures of the chase is social intercourse, the cementing of friendships, and the opportunities of better acquaintance with neighbours which it affords.

These opportunities are not always taken advantage of, for though we all can point to fields where most of the regular followers are on such terms as to make it almost a happy family circle, we probably all know one or more hunts where jealousy, pride, or pure foolishness spoil much of the comfort and pleasure of all. In most fields there is,

however, at least one individual whom all agree in desiring to avoid,—some cad, some snob,—to escape whom we hang back in covert, jump some appalling place, or, if in a crowd, endeavour to get our worst enemy or most unselfish friend between him and us. If one of these objectionable persons, or well-meaning bores, comes out cub-hunting, we are at his mercy; he can get at us, and the music of the hounds is mingled with his ceaseless jabber; our only escape is the road home to breakfast. Oh, gentle reader, have you not often, at covert side, endeavoured to stay the torrent of "shop" poured into your ear, by assenting to any opinion, acquiescing in every view put forward, no matter at what violation to conscience and conviction? Have we not all, in the dread

that an objection or divergent view, however gently expressed, might open another flood-gate, been false to our creeds, and thrown our most cherished prejudices overboard? I wonder if Egerton Warburton had some particular man in his eye when he wrote the following stanza in his famous song, "Quaesitum Meritis." I am certain that many a man who has sung this verse has thought of some one to whom the words particularly applied—

"For coffee-house gossip some hunters come out,
Of all matters prating save that they're about;
From scandal and cards they to politics roam,
They ride forty miles, head the fox, and go home.
Such sportsmen as these we good fellows condemn,
And I vow we'll ne'er drink a *quaesitum* to them."

The master, huntsman, and servants are, during the cub-hunting season, free from

many of the annoyances that a large and mixed field too often brings in its train, but they have need of the liberty which a small following and early hours afford. Some M.F.H.'s do not make known their intentions as to when and where they hunt, and small blame to them, for at the very beginning of the season the fewer there are out the better, as thirty, forty, or more couple of hounds, including entering puppies, will require their undivided attention. Yet if they meet at 5.30 or 6 a.m. there is little to fear; for the men who hunt to ride, the men who follow the ladies rather than the hounds, the men who come out to display their attire, and even the horse-breakers who like to educate their young ones at the expense of the hounds, are all most likely

still in their earths. A kindly Master who takes a pleasure in seeing the schoolboy on his pony, and a pride in seeing these youngsters enter well, will give them a chance to put in a day or two before the summer holidays end, and will let every regular and trusted member of the hunt have an opportunity of being present. It is to the genuine Nimrod a pleasant thing to get up in the dark, and, after a light breakfast, hastily swallowed, to mount in the dawn and once more find himself jogging beside the hounds along the road on an autumn morning. His mind is easy and his temper unruffled by struggles to get into leathers and top-boots, or by the memory of letters unanswered on his table; any clothes will do, and he will be home

again in time to attend to pressing matters of business. There are no lurking fears as to whether his mount is equal to the task before him; there is no waiting at the meet, and hounds are busy in the covert as soon as it is reached. The sound of the horn, the opening pack, the view-halloo from the whipper-in, the crack of the men's whips, and the rattling and rustling in the gorse, are pleasanter because of the interval that has passed since last they woke the woodlands, and for the stillness of the outside world at this early hour. Soon after the first brace of cubs have been killed, and hounds are being taken to the next cover, the labourer going to the field and the horses to the plough remind him how young the day still is; and a little later the sun on his back,

and the "had enough" appearance of the five or six couple of hounds trailing behind the huntsman, tell him that it is still only cub-hunting, and time for all to be going home. There are, on these days, reminders that one year has gone and another begun, and you miss some of the old veterans with grizzled and scarred muzzles, and hear that a few of those you welcome, as you have welcomed them for half a dozen seasons, when work with cubs began, are there only till the young 'uns have been entered; and you see the new entry, with their as yet unfamiliar forms, answering to unfamiliar names. In October many a run takes place that would do credit to the open season, and these fast spins across the country, when the ground is hard and fences and ditches

horribly blind, can test the mettle of horse and rider, and make any man feel very comfortably satisfied with his performance, if, by luck or good management, he negotiates the hidden dangers that lurk on one side or the other of most October fences. In a run at this time of the year, gates are as yet fastened up, the gaps of a past season are undiscoverable, the weak places and the strong blackthorn branches are covered with the leaf and bramble. The fastest twenty-five minutes I ever saw was run on a certain 14th October, hounds getting away together in a bunch from Seamer Whin, and killing their fox in ground now covered by the suburbs of smoky Middlesborough. It was not cub-hunting, yet one of those delightful "things" that is the well-earned

reward of the constant follower, the envy of the absent one, and ten times more enjoyed for being unexpected.

Countries vary so much in the proportion of woodland they contain, and in the stock of foxes that may be depended upon, that the circumstances of each district influence the character of cub-hunting. Where coverts are extensive and numerous, and litters abound, cubbing may mean the deliberate killing down of a great number of cubs in the interests of the sport that is to follow, and far beyond what is required for blooding hounds. When foxes are well preserved, and in plenty, a Master does well to kill a large number, for there is this amount of truth in the saying, "The more foxes you kill, the more you will have," that owners

of game coverts and non-hunting proprietors are unwilling very often to encourage foxes or to have litters on their places if a fair proportion are not killed. In such a country as this, even when, owing to an early harvest or absence of arable land, a start is made in August, cub-hunting may be cub-hunting and cub-killing all the time up to the end of October. In other hunts, after a week or two's cubbing, hunting may be very much the same as after the opening day, the scarlet coat and top-boot alone marking the transition. The conduct of the huntsman will not be so much actuated by blood-thirstiness, as by the wish to discover where there are foxes, to give the cubs a little instruction in going away, and hounds a few lessons of how to behave in the open. He will not,

or need not, ask every time whether a fox is an old one or not, and many a run that would be considered good in the winter can be enjoyed in October in such a country as this. But for the great majority of hunting-men, these early days are but the time for getting their studs together, their horses and themselves into condition; and custom and tradition has consecrated the first hunting-day in November as the New Year for a follower of hounds.

VIII

THE GREATEST RUN I EVER SAW



INCIDENTS WITH THE CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY DRAG.

From a sketch by C. M. Newton.

VIII

IF anyone were to ask me which was the best run I ever saw, I should say the great run with the Cleveland hounds on Monday, January 9, 1882. Probably many, if not most, hunting-men would turn up their noses at it if they saw the country over which the most extraordinary fox in my experience took us, for I admit that nothing but the fact of having been bred in such a wild hunting country would make it in the widest sense a rideable one. I must further confess that the fact of being

sole survivor of it makes its memory all the dearer, though I regret to this day that I had no companion during the last twenty-five minutes to support my evidence, or to discuss with me in after years its wonders. I trust that in attempting to describe it, if I seem to be utterly devoid of modesty and to be blowing loud blasts on my own horn, it will be remembered that every man has some day in a long life, in which he is conscious that he has had the best of it. This was my day, and I certainly felt at the end of it that it would have been worth risking one's life for; it gave me the sensation that comes now and again in every life, of not having lived in vain. The following account is for the most part from my diary, written while I

was still stiff from the previous day's exertions.

Monday, 9th January 1882. — Hounds met at Ayton, where there was breakfast at the Buck. This was the most extraordinary day I ever had. I rode Queen Mab in the morning till she got an overreach, when I changed on to Faraway, on which horse I finished the first, and was there when Bob Brunton took the fox from the hounds in Hell Gill. I state this to correct the press accounts, which describe my getting my second horse in the great run—not to save my own credit, but to preserve the record of my horse's marvellous performance. The first was a ringing run, fairly fast, on the hills between Roseberry Topping and Guisborough Banks, and for

forty minutes I rode Faraway up and down the hills, over the moors, and in and out of the gills before we found the second and ever-memorable fox. My brother Jack did not have a second horse, but rode his mount (a blood Irish hunter called Sligo, that cost two hundred and fifty guineas, and was worth every sixpence of the money) all day, and "let him have it" in the first run. If we had both started from scratch, he might have taken first honours; as it was, he took the second place in a numerous field, as the sequel will show. I have no doubt that the competition between us ministered to my success, for we generally rode a trifle jealous, but were always best pleased when we could share the honours.

I must for a moment depart from my

diary, and say a word about Faraway. He was an Irish thoroughbred, by Fairyland, purchased at Tattersall's in 1880, from the stud of chestnuts sent up by Captain Amcotts, of the 5th Dragoon Guards. He was knocked down to me for fifty guineas. I followed him back to his box, and when I asked the groom why he had only two old shoes on, and what was wrong with the brute, he said, "Sure, he's a grand hunter, and nothing wrong wid him; but ye can't shoe him, clip him, or physic him." Some years after I found that he had killed a blacksmith just before I bought him; he was quite capable of killing any number of that profession or any other — yet it was not temper, but fear and nerves, that made him dangerous. Fast as the wind, hard

as nails, wild as a hawk, are all expressions that fitted him. His little failings were discourtesy — for he met strangers visiting his box on his hind-legs and sparred at them—and buck-jumping, at which he could beat anything I ever saw at the Wild West Show, refusing to let anyone hold his bridle or to stand still while being mounted. One great fault he had — he would not, when hounds ran, allow you to open a gate, always managing, if you did succeed in getting your hand out to reach the catch, to dive under your arm and whip round; while, if anyone opened the gate for you, he went through it like a bullet. But when once I had become familiar with his eccentricities, and abandoned all attempts to differ with his methods and manners, I

found him one of the most delightful mounts I ever got across—all life, liberty, and whalebone, and impossible to tire. I counted him among the most precious of my possessions, till after a bad fall he nearly killed me, breaking a few of my bones, and making me literally sit up and spit blood. I then yielded to the solicitations of my friends, and sold him to Mr. James Darrell, who told me he had gone well in Leicestershire in other hands.

To return to my diary. After the first fox had been broken up, and the brush presented to the Hon. A. Sidney, of Ingleby, the head being attached to my own saddle, we went to Highcliff, where we found the real old Cæsar, a great grey-hound fox. He broke over the moor at once, and we raced

across to Bethel Slack. They drove down Wiley Gill, making the ravine ring again, as far as Slapewath, and then he again took the open for a short time, till he got level with Cass Rock. He then took along Guisborough Banks to where we found him, hounds running hard all the way. He now tried a change of tactics, and took a line that was to astonish all and to make most cry "*capevi!*"[1] breaking on to Guisborough Moor. Hounds followed at a terrific pace, leaving all but the blood horses far behind. By Sleddale he turned west and crossed the great bog. My brother (who was level with, or in front of me here) and I went straight at it, our only chance of getting near the now flying pack being to take

[1] Mr. John Jorrocks's Latin.

everything as it came. In we went, both together, he getting to the other side with a frantic struggle; Faraway, mad with being thus checked, rolled, plunged, and kicked, so that I could not recover the reins after I had got on to my feet. After a minute's delay, that seemed an eternity, we bucketed up the hill, while below us were others in the bog, looking in vain for a crossing. When I reached the sky-line, nothing could I see or hear. One moment of agonising anxiety, and I caught a glimpse of my brother's hat, bobbing up as he rose a distant hill. As hard as I could take my horse, I made for this ever-blessed top-hat, and came up with him near the Piggeries, as he rode at the tail of the now almost silent pack, streaming in a file along the moor road.

They ran as if it were a drag; it was real business. A mile like this on the straight, and then a swift, sure swing over the wall to the right, and they were flying over the Kildale Valley—my brother and I, in our glory, taking every wall and fence as it met us. A left turn, and in a minute we were going up the valley to the moors above Baysdale. Here were sheep pastures enclosed with hideous walls, wire on most, and all uphill. Sligo takes a line of barricaded gaps; Faraway goes slap-bang through the first gate, and then takes the timber decently and in order. Another bog, another stream, a few more fences, and then the open moor. How much longer can a horse go this pace? It is too serious a business to speak to each other as we pound

down into Baysdale, the hounds getting the better of us. As we cross the enclosures by Baysdale Abbey, the one solitary ploughman in the out-of-the-world valley stops in his work to look at the rare spectacle.

"Have you seen him?" I shout.

"Ay! a gurt greyhound fox."

"How long since?"

"Seven minutes."

Seven minutes, and hounds racing like this! Will they never check? — no, they never will, and some will never return to the kennel again. The Abbey is passed in one hour and twenty minutes from the find, with only one momentary check, and the mountain beyond looks impossible to negotiate. I cross the stream, and begin the ascent with a few tail hounds. They have

shot their bolt, and are struggling on with bloodshot eyes, dropping into my wake as I pass them.

"Come on, Jack! You must do it."

"I can't. Look at Sligo."

Sligo was standing rocking at the foot of the hill, with his back up and staring eye —he was completely done. Could I get up to that sky-line where the last trailing hounds were disappearing? It looked desperate, but Faraway did it, and now I must give him a minute. I had dismounted the last twenty yards to pull him up the top edge of the scar. I could see about eleven couple filing away along the ridge of the moor half a mile ahead. Absolutely nothing but range after range of barren moors was now in sight! Where was this strange

fox bound for? I was astonished to find my horse still full of going, as I got on to the ridge and on to sound ground, and in a few minutes I was alongside the leading seven couple. Hounds now bore along for the Farndale head moors, and one by one the stragglers gave up the chase. Now and then one of these would pull up all at once. I saw the veteran Hermit roll into the heather, where he was found cold and dead next day. Still the leading bunch held on, and Wrangle (from the Oakley) is driving away first, followed closely by Statesman, Bajazet, Rascal, and Ringwood. As they crossed a boggy slack, I strained my eyes to see this terrible fox; it was impossible he could stand up many minutes more. I felt for my knife—but the end is

not to be yet. The thought uppermost in my mind is, what a wonder my horse is! Is it possible for any animal to survive this? and yet he is going strong. The moors look endless; I can see, even in the fast-deepening dusk, miles of desolation in front.

A turn to the right, and we reach the edge of the hillside above Ingleby. Down the rocks and the cliff-side dash the now only seven couple, and once more open into cry. The pace on the moor was too great for much speaking. I cannot get down there. I make a despairing effort to cross a bog at the top—I cannot do it. The north wind is blowing a cloud of spray from the dripping bog at the edge of the cliff, and the stars are coming out. I see beyond me an abandoned workman's shanty, and my mind

is made up. The door is locked; a good kick and it is open. In the inside there is just room for my horse. The ceiling is low, but so is now his head. I shut the door and run as fast as top-boots will allow along the edge of the cliff to the top of Midnight Crags. Here I hear the hounds still running some hundred of feet below me in the darkness. I labour on, till, exhausted, I sit down above the pass into Bilsdale. I can still hear them occasionally, in spite of the wind howling up the gully, and then all is still. I wait some minutes, then halloo with all my might. They have either killed or run to ground, but wherever it is, I cannot reach them.

Eventually five and a half couples came to me, and I floundered and blundered over the

moor to my horse. I had not a match, so as to examine the mouths of the hounds, but, as far as I could judge, they had not killed. I could find no blood—perhaps if they had run into him they had not managed to do more than just kill. I drained my flask, and led my horse down the Ingleby incline, reaching at length Ingleby village.

When I got to the inn, to my surprise, there was Bob Brunton, who, having lost all trace of us in Kildale, whither he had tracked us, had ridden on here with Richard Spink of the Bilsdale, where, night overtaking them, they had sought shelter and refreshment. Bob, on seeing me, literally hugged me, and swore I ought to be knighted. We got the hounds bedded in a barn and fed, and my horse gruelled, and

then I jogged home—but sleep was banished by aching limbs, and the excitement of the day. All night I saw the whole scene enacted over again. The streaming ten couple always tearing and racing on as if for ever over valley and lonely moor. I felt my horse floundering through the bogs again; myself clambering up and down those gills under the stars—each wall and stream, gate and stile were jumped a dozen times. I could see again the straggling hounds, run out, sitting in the heather, and hear their dismal howling as they realised they were "done" and "lost."

Now this run was an extraordinarily long one; it cannot be made less than 19 miles, and is more like 21. It was 11 miles from point of find to Ingleby Landslip; but

where I think it tops the record is the pace. I believe the whole run to have occupied 1 hour and 45 minutes—1 hour and 20 minutes to Baysdale, and 25 on to the landslip. I know that it will not be credited by most hunting-men, but it must be remembered that it was mostly over open moorland, with few obstacles to check hounds, and, except the solitary ploughman in Baysdale, no sign of humanity all the way. Three hounds died of exhaustion, and the other lost ones were only got back by degrees during the week following.

In connection with this run I think the following performance of Bob Brunton's worth recording. He had hunted all day, being at the meet at Ayton some miles from his home, and I found him at Ingleby at

night. He remounted after he had attended to the hounds, and rode to Guisborough, say 8 miles, where he looked in at a political meeting which was being held; he rode on the same night to the Kennels at Warrenby, 8 miles more, and found the huntsman sitting up disconsolate and refusing to go to bed without his hounds. He started before daybreak (3 a.m.), and, riding the same horse, accompanied the huntsman, Will Nicoll, to Ingleby (12 miles); hence he helped to collect the lost hounds on the moor and in Bilsdale; and the following afternoon I met him, still on the same horse, now more like a gigantic greyhound than anything else, escorting the hounds back to Warrenby from Ingleby (16 miles); and when this was accomplished, he rode home

to Marton (7 miles); so that if we put down 40 miles for the long hard day's hunting, we have

To the meet and two long runs, and to Ingleby	40
Ingleby to Guisborough	8
Guisborough to Warrenby	8
Warrenby to Ingleby	16
Collecting hounds	10
Ingleby to Warrenby	16
Warrenby to Marton	7
	105

a total of 105 miles, 65 of which were undoubtedly ridden after the day's hunting by Mr. Brunton on the same horse that he had ridden hard (for he was among the hardest riders ever seen in Cleveland) during the longest and severest day the Cleveland hounds have had in my lifetime.

As for the horses, Faraway was at covert side again within three weeks. Sligo, with

whom it appeared to be a case for an anxious hour or so, came up to time as well.

Finally, a few words about the hounds that led the van. Two couple were to the front the whole time, and Wrangle led throughout.

1. Wrangle was a powerful bitch that Mr. Wharton, now master of the Cleveland, brought from the Oakley. She was by the Milton Wrangler, out of Oakley Flora. She was 5 years old at the time of this run, and was on the list of the running hounds till 1885, and at the great age of 9, for a hunting-hound, could still hold her place. From this bitch are descended many of the best hounds in the Cleveland kennel.
2. Ringwood, by Lord Fitzwilliam's Champion, out of his Roguish, was 7 years old.
3. Bajazet, by Milton Bajazet, out of their Scornful, was 6 years old.
4. Rascal, by the Milton Ransack, out of Lord Zetland's Careless, was 5 years old.
5. Statesman, by the Belvoir Saffron, out of their Redcap, was 6 years old.

The following were the remainder of the leading bunch as they ran into the darkness :—

6. General, by Major Brown's Chorister, out of his Gracious, 7 years old.
7. Songstress, by Cleveland Jovial, out of Cleveland Symmetry, 7 years old.
8. Arthur, by Lord Yarborough's Ranger, out of his South Durham Actress, 5 years old.
9. Gertrude, by Cleveland General, out of Cleveland Careless, 5 years old.
10. Novelty, by Cleveland Nelson, out of Cleveland Friendly, 3 years old.
11. Merryman, by Cleveland Senator, out of Cleveland Maypole, 3 years old.

The surviving hounds were thus—

Hounds 7 years old	3
„ 6 „ „	2
„ 5 „ „	4
„ 3 „ „	2
	5½ couple.

It is a little painful to confess that other blood than Cleveland made this run the memorable one it is. But so it was that in a chase that tested the pace, stamina, and endurance of hounds to their utmost limit, the Milton blood showed best in front. I have placed the ages of these hounds on record as being evidence of the value of mature-seasoned hounds, and in the hope that it may discourage the tendency of many M.F.H.'s, in these days, when stoutness is so often sacrificed for appearance, to yield to the temptation of replacing hounds in their prime by a big entry of promising and shapely puppies. I shall ever maintain that the proved hounds of from 4 to 6, or even 7 years old, should form the main body of a pack, and I firmly believe that

there would be more straight-necked foxes and good runs satisfactorily finished were this the rule. As it is, there are generally twice, or even three times, the number of hounds 1, 2, or 3 years, than of older ones.[1]

Since this day I have seen many a good run, over every variety of country, and each hunting morning that I ride out I start hoping for such another; but as the seasons slip away and years roll on, the hope grows fainter and fainter, and I begin

[1] On Thursday, 19th November 1776, the Duke of Beaufort's hounds had an extraordinary day, from Lyde Green head, Bristol, two rings in the Vale (15 miles), then to the hills, first to Sir William Codrington's woods at Doddington, then to the Duke's wood at Didmarston, Hanbury, Upton, Killcott, and killed between Killcott and Forcester—found at 7.30 and killed at 4. All the field thrown out, and six couple out of seventeen in at the death. They were found lying on their bellies, with Reynard in their midst. "Estimated distance, 50 miles," and "the largest fox seen in these parts."

to think that as long as life lasts I shall never again see anything like it. Like others, as they begin to get grey, I become *laudator temporis acti*, and ask, Where are now the hounds that could do this? Where is there another fox like old Cæsar? And, worst of all, I doubt if I or any horse of mine could struggle to the end if such an opportunity should ever return.

There have, of course, been many more remarkable runs than this one recorded. One of my father's tenants, who recently died, told me he remembered, when a boy, Ralph Lambton coming into Bishop Auckland on foot, with one and a half couple of hounds and a fox dead beat a few yards in front, calling through the streets, "Hoick to Jingler!" The fox lay

down in the main street, and the hounds, quite done and unable to tackle him, lay down beside him. The master gave them a few minutes to kill him, but as they could not, he had the fox attended to, and turned down again in his native covert in the Sedgefield country.

IX

BADGER-HUNTING

IX

THE badger is of such a shy and self-effacing disposition that he seems likely to retire altogether from amongst us, unless the sportsman's interest in him can be revived. The badger's love of seclusion and natural instinct to avoid observation will become more and more difficult for him to gratify, unless his kind receive special protection in most parts of England. The humane Act that rendered the brutal pastime of badger-baiting illegal no doubt has encouraged his destruction and extinction in

many districts. The demand for badgers ceased; the supply diminished. We would gladly believe, in a more merciful age, that, apart from legality or illegality, men nowadays do not generally regard badger-drawing out of boxes or tubs as a reputable sport. All genuine sportsmen have something of the naturalist in their composition, but where this instinct is not developed, the average sportsman is unlikely to trouble himself about an animal that is seldom *en evidence*, who selects the night for his appearance, and whose invasions into man's sphere are of so unobtrusive a character. The fox, the otter, and other beasts of chase keep themselves before the public by their crimes, but the self-renouncing modesty of the badger has led him to be neglected or

despised. Yet, apart from shaving brushes, a badger has his uses. He is a destroyer of wasps and small vermin, and an excellent maker of fox-earths. In countries where mange in foxes has become a scourge, the preservation of badgers would do much to rid fox-hunters of this plague—for they are wonderful cleansers of earths, cleaning those they frequent in the most thorough manner; and, unless very numerous, they encourage foxes, as their "sets" are the fox's favourite resort. The badger may live in our midst, almost at the threshold of our doors, and yet leave us ignorant of his presence. I once asked a Cornish farmer if there were badgers about his place; he not only answered there were none, but that he had never heard of or seen any during the many

years he had lived on the farm. Within ten minutes from receiving this information, one of my terriers had "found" in a culvert that ran at the back of his barn, causing intense astonishment. His scepticism, however, did not finally give way to conviction till two badgers were unearthed, after a night of toil, at five o'clock in the morning. Once, when travelling on the Great Western Railway, I overheard the following conversation between two gentlemen :—

First well-informed gent : "Seen this in the papers about badgers being caught in Essex?"

Second : "No. How interesting!"

First : "Yes. Very curious, isn't it?"

Second : "By the way, what is a badger like?"



THE CLEVELAND FOXHOUNDS AT EXERCISE.

From a photograph of Mr. Heywood Hardy's picture, "A Summer's Day in Cleveland."

First: "Oh—er—a badger is an animal that lives in the water, something like a seal."

Second: "No, no! That's an otter. I know what an otter is. A badger is more like a ferret or weasel."

First: "Yes, I believe you're right, but I fancy it's larger than that."

Second: "How big would you say?"

First: "Oh, I don't know exactly, but nearly as big as a hare."

Second: "Oh, of course! They used to bait badgers with dogs; they must be larger than a ferret."

And so they went on, much to my amusement; and when they had set up their badger, I rather cruelly knocked it over, and gave them a little elementary educa-

tion on the badger and his ways. Now, these two persons had both of them a natural disposition to be interested in badgers, and, astounding as is the ignorance of thousands who are fond of animal life, it requires but a very few words to arouse their interest in the rarer species of wild animals that we can still boast of as British.

The fact is, since the cruel and brutalising sport of badger-baiting has been stamped out, the badger has been forgotten except by a few naturalists, sportsmen, and by the gamekeeper. Being neither furred nor feathered game, the keeper, of course (where his master's wishes to the contrary are not expressed), treats him as vermin and wages war on all his tribe. With all

their good qualities, keepers are too apt to consider that nothing but game has any right to live in an English covert.

> The mousing owl he spares not, flitting through the twilight dim,
> The beak it wears, it is, he swears, too hook'd a one for him.
> In every woodland songster he suspects a secret foe,
> His ear no music toucheth, save the roosting pheasant's crow.

Down go the falcons, the buzzards, the hawks, the jays, the magpies, the owls, the woodpeckers, the kingfishers, and any other bird that "wears a beak too hook'd," or a dress gaudy enough to attract his attention. Badgers and squirrels are put into the same category as polecats, stoats, and weasels, and with almost as little compunction. Yet a badger is practically harm-

less to game, though I will not pretend to acquit him of the charge of taking a rabbit out of a snare, or of digging out a nest of young rabbits on occasion. He is, however, death on small vermin and such pests as wasps, though his main food consists of roots, fruits, wild honey, beetles, and insects. I believe that badgers eat slugs, but I have placed dishes of assorted kinds, from big black to small white, before my tame ones, and never could induce them to partake of them.

I see no other method by which the badger's continued existence can be assured than that of hunting him. Personally, I should be content if I could believe that the desire to keep an English species from extinction would perpetuate his existence;

but I fear that, like the red deer, fox, and otter, he will have to make his exit if he be not hunted. Some object to badger-hunting underground because of the punishment often inflicted on the terriers, and of the tendency that the sport may degenerate into a sort of drawing match. If, however, we are to compare one sport with another, there is nothing in a properly-managed badger-digging that can disgust the spectator as he must be disgusted towards the finish of the otter hunt.

One of the most cruel amusements, if we look closely into it, is ferreting rabbits. And yet who will say that ferreting rabbits is anything but a fair and reputable sport? But the man who is constantly rabbiting

will announce, with airs of superior humanity, that digging out a badger is too brutal a sport for him. Why, there is no comparison! In a properly managed badger digging there is no cruelty whatever. The badger is taken without so much as a scratch, and the terriers consider their pleasure cheaply purchased when they have the misfortune to get a kiss on the face from a badger. No man wishes to have a good terrier mauled, and such men as enjoy taking the badger are always ready to bear their own share of risk of punishment and exertion in securing the prize. To dig out a badger in a strong "set," requires great and continuous exertion, considerable knowledge and skill in the pursuit, and a well-trained and trustworthy

team of terriers. The terriers must, to be successful, combine discretion with valour and pertinacity. A dog that goes to ground, and immediately tries a "set to" with a badger, either gets badly punished or such a frightening that he becomes a funker. All that a good terrier should do, when despatched underground, is to follow the badger, giving tongue till he corners him, and then lie up to him baying, keeping him there through long hours, if necessary, while the digging proceeds; never heeding the noise of spade, pick, and shovel overhead, and never fighting unless the badger attempts to charge or leave his place. One reliable terrier with a good voice is worth all the worrying, excitable terriers in the countryside. I

have seen a dog keep a dozen men digging for hours; and when at last they got to him, they found he was only barking out of the fulness of his heart, or scratching and chewing roots to get up a rabbit-hole.

The scarcity of badgers, and the consequent restriction of hunting-grounds, has deprived the terrier in a great degree of his vocation. As the name terrier implies a dog adapted for "going to earth," no dog that cannot go to ground is properly a terrier; and no terrier that will not go to ground is worthy of his name. It has always seemed to me a reproach to my native county that the beastly little lap-dog called a Yorkshire terrier should be so described, for though no

doubt a whole pack of these ridiculous creatures could go down a rabbit-hole, yet if, by some inconceivable process, they were induced to venture down a badger-earth, they would hardly afford a meal for a brock. For a totally opposite reason another Yorkshire breed is unfitted for the name of terrier—this is the Airedale. He is, as a rule, a game sort of dog, and I have seen one look very much distressed when he could only get his head into a large earth. The preposterous size of this so-called terrier is such that he cannot go to ground; this is also the case with the general run of Bedlingtons, Dandie Dinmonts, black and tan, and even Irish terriers; though when a Dandy or Irish terrier is small enough, he is excellent,

and can claim the title. The fox-terrier, whether wire-haired or smooth, is often an excellent badger dog. The bull-terrier, as seen in the showyard, is too big, and, when diminutive, is generally too pugnacious for the purpose, and has too much of the obstinate and unreasoning ferocity of the bull-dog to make a good badger dog. Yet it is sometimes useful to have a strain of his blood in the fox-terrier, if it can be obtained in such small quantity as neither to destroy the reliability and voice, nor the less excitable disposition of the fox-terrier.

When pursuing a badger underground, the dog that does the most satisfactory work is hard, strong, short-legged, sharp-tongued, and discreet; one that is a sure marker, that

will not go if there is nothing to go for, that will not quit the pursuit as long as there is game ahead—who, regardless of noise above and the onslaught of the enemy underground, in spite of twisting passages and the interposition of barricades, continues the attack, and never ceases from giving tongue when in proximity to the foe. Such a terrier should not close unless he is charged, and he must not be of so excitable a temperament that he will bay an imaginary foe, or attack another dog despatched underground to his relief. I am not sure whether a good Dachshund (*Dachs*—German for badger) is not as useful as any other. The properly trained sort is only "made in Germany," and on the Continent he is most intelligent and companionable, enormously strong, very pertina-

cious, has a splendid voice, and beautiful teeth.

In our own island, the Scotch terrier is hard to beat. The right breed are wonders of pluck, endurance, perseverance, and intelligence; their voices are sharp and penetrating, and their long, lithe bodies are carried on short, active legs; they are, moreover, charming companions, and fasten on to their owner's affections as firmly as to a badger's neck. The Irish terrier, when small enough, is a good one, and so is the rarer old-fashioned English broken-haired black and tan.

Digging the badger is, perhaps, the most entertaining manner of taking him. It is pleasant on a summer's morning to start after daybreak with an eager team of terriers,

and all the appliances for laying siege to the badger's stronghold, in the hope that, after the sorties and assaults of the day, you may return with something worth looking at in the sacks. And there are many worse ways of spending a holiday than in watching your terriers at their lawful and natural avocation, and handling pick, spade, and shovel yourself. Some, however, shrink from the labour and sweat of the digging, and prefer hunting the badger at night above ground. For this sport any bobbery pack will do if the members of it are a sporting lot, are fond of a scent, and can make a good tow-row. Many sorts and conditions of dogs will do for the hunt on a moonlight night, but the best run and the best music will be with harriers.

A game fox-hound, a bob-tailed sheep-dog,

or a retriever will come in useful. The course of procedure is simple. About 10 p.m. the badger-earths in the neighbourhood are stopped, with the exception of two or three well-used entrances. In these are placed sacks with a running cord through the neck of the bag, the ends of which are firmly pegged and secured, so that when in his flight he charges into his earth, he fastens himself neatly into the sack. A man should be posted near (taking the wind into account) to make all quite safe—if the badger falls into the trap laid for him. The pack is then taken out, and coverts and hedgerows drawn, and when the scent is struck, a run of a few miles may, at least, be hoped for. This kind of hunting yields its full crop of disappointments.

I knew of one undergraduate at Oxford, whose sporting establishment consisted of a tame badger, a beagle, and a bull-terrier. Whenever he required a little exercise and a hunting run, the badger was turned out, the beagle laid on after a certain amount of law, and the bull-terrier kept in reserve to recover the badger, should he go to ground. This sporting quartette thoroughly understood each other, and, as a rule, each kept to his own special department. The badger was expected, at least, to give a two or three miles' run over a country, the beagle to speak to him all the way, and to account for him, the man to keep the beagle in view, and the terrier to facilitate the operation of bagging the badger at the finish. Thus all four obtained in an original manner exercise and

diversion. This form of amusement, however, does not appear to reach a much higher level than hunting carted deer.

In conclusion, I would appeal to all lovers of nature, among the best of whom are numbered the true sportsmen, to use their influence in securing a reasonable protection for the badger. And if they will take the trouble of observing his habits and mode of life, I can predict with confidence they will come to the same conclusion as the writer, that he is an animal well worth preserving from extinction, both as a beast of chase and on account of his many interesting and useful qualities.

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